

SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF OPEN ENROLLMENT ON
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN INDIANA

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BY
RICH CORY
DR. SERENA SALLOUM – CHAIR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

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ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Superintendents' Perceptions of the Impact of Open Enrollment on Public School Districts in Indiana

STUDENT: Rich Cory

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This study collected and analyzed superintendent perceptions of open enrollment in Indiana public schools. Superintendents are uniquely positioned to be at the forefront of open enrollment trends and must work to balance the issues associated with the transfer of students in and out of the local district. The superintendents then plan district budgets and account for the impact of those budgets to finances, staffing, and programming. The dissertation used a survey to collect superintendent thoughts in relation to the six constructs of finance, staffing, programming, climate, marketing, and demographic changes. Inferential statistics were used to analyze the results. The superintendents reported that districts that were financially stable were able to provide high quality staff and were able to maintain staffing levels. In addition, superintendents in more financially stable districts reported a more positive climate. Finally, superintendents disclosed that they need to compete for students at public schools. Superintendents' roles have changed and they must market their district as they communicate with all stakeholders in order to attract and retain students.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL CHOICE

One of the most sacred tasks of a parent is to make sure their child has a high quality education. Some early colonies in America believed in the need to educate each new generation for the preservation of a democratic society. Thomas Jefferson once said, “Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish & improve the law for educating the common people” (Jefferson Letter to Wythe, 1786). Jefferson believed basic education was essential to securing life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for Americans. Educated citizens know and understand their rights and can preserve the democracy. When a society is educated, members can fight for their rights and will have the intellectual ability to express itself against the government that is imposing on those rights (Segarra, 2013). Jefferson understood the importance of education in supporting and sustaining democracy, and the role of the government in establishing that right.

To this day, Americans still value a quality education; for example, 48% of Americans rated their local school an A or a B in a 2012 poll while rating schools poorly nationwide as a whole (Strauss, 2012). Because of the perceived right to an education, education reform continues to be a major focus for leaders and policymakers. Leaders believe that they can always improve the current process and gain better results. The United States has a wide array of laws at the federal level, the state level, and the local level intended to give students a free and appropriate education that will prepare them for citizenship. The role of the government then can be viewed as improving rules, policies, and legislation and thereby enhancing the quality of education in the United States.

Throughout the nation’s history, there have been cycles of political pressure that stressed the need to drastically improve the institution of education. A major reform movement in the

20th century came after the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957. Sputnik was the first satellite launched into space and when it orbited the Earth, Americans were fearful of the technological skills of the Soviets. This caused alarm and panic about whether America's schools were falling behind the Russians and we needed to improve the educational system (Powell, 2007). Another major 20th century reform movement occurred in the 1980s when the federal government commissioned *A Nation at Risk*, a study of the current state of the educational system. The study concluded that once again said schools were failing and needed to drastically improve. More recent reform efforts have followed several iterations, as described by Borhnstedt.

Perhaps *A Nation at Risk*'s most important legacies are the educational reforms in our schools since its publication. We have seen Effective Schools, Accelerated Schools, and Schools Within Schools and, nationally, the Education Goals movement. The standards movement that emerged in the 1990s has morphed into the 2001 reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, better known as *No Child Left Behind*, followed by Race to the Top, and now the Common Core State Standards Initiative (para. 2, 2013).

After Sputnik and after *A Nation at Risk*, the federal government invested large quantities of time and money into improving the educational system. Every few years the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965 gets rewritten by Congress with the intent of improving education in America. While there are many platforms for improving education, one platform that continually gains traction are the options allowed under school choice policies. School choice gives parents the freedom to decide on the best educational option for their child(ren). Parents have the ability to send their child to any school that they believe is higher performing,

has better teachers, has more options for educational programming, or for any other factors they believe benefits their child.

These studies, political pressure, and legislation, prompted drastic changes in the American education system. Locally, the more recent phenomena of open enrollment in Indiana provides educational reform. This dissertation examines open enrollment as an option within the larger umbrella of school choice in Indiana public schools.

Schools and Choice in Indiana

The state of Indiana structures school districts around local communities. In the early days of the State's founding, the schools were set up by local townships. The original land for Indiana was carved out by the federal government in the Northwest Ordinance of 1785 and again in 1787. The first rule stated the public needed to support education and the second rule explained the purposes of education (Kaestle, 1988). Originally, schools were located within each township in section 16. Article 8, Section 1 of the *Indiana Constitution* specifically calls for the creation of schools by the local community. The local community has then been the caretakers of the district through an elected or appointed school board. After the school consolidation movement of the late 1950s and 1960s, smaller districts combined. Now districts represent several communities or larger metropolitan areas. Indiana has 92 counties and most of those counties have several individual school districts. The control of each district is maintained by a locally elected board of education. Because there are numerous districts within a county, students typically attend the local district where they reside.

Prior to 2008, if a student attended school outside the local district, the family had to pay tuition. If parents did not like the local district, there were limited options available to seek an

alternative schooling placement. In the past few years, Indiana has become a leader in giving parents a choice due to school funding and policy changes at the state level.

The idea of school choice in Indiana has gained momentum in recent years and seems to be growing as more parents become aware of it as an option for education. In Indiana, the state legislature, along with former Governor Mitch Daniels and former Governor Mike Pence, made school choice a bedrock of education reform. Indiana has become one of the most aggressive states in terms of increasing school choice, making it an important state to study (Wall Street Journal, 2011). Public Law 146 of 2008 created open enrollment by shifting the funding of school from local tax money to state sales tax revenue (Herrmann, Burroughs, & Plucker, 2009). Parents could now choose to send their child to a neighboring district without any tuition costs. Currently, 29 states have multiple forms of school choice options from open enrollment, to vouchers, and even tax incentives (EdChoice.org, 2017). Indiana also has the school voucher program, but that is issue not part of this dissertation.

The Indiana legislature mirrored national policies written by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). ALEC has been one of the largest proponents of school choice. ALEC is a conservative policy group made up of legislators and private members nationwide. This group writes sample policy and legislation for use by states when proposing school choice laws. Their policies on open enrollment and school vouchers resembles the policies enacted in Indiana over the past 8 years (www.alec.org, 2018).

Indiana superintendents have been working to implement new policies related to student transfers and have experienced large numbers of students transferring in and out of schools. The transferring of schools by significant numbers of students directly affects the Education Fund for school districts and superintendents are dealing with the consequences of those policies. When

students transfer, so does the money for those students. The intent of Public Law 146 of 2008 was to provide a free market for education thereby giving parents a choice and creating competition among schools (Whitehurst, 2012). As the money follows the student, it impacts the districts. The central focus of this dissertation is to collect superintendent perceptions of open enrollment policies in Indiana.

School choice options in Indiana are becoming more common for many families. These options allow families to choose whichever school they want and sometimes siblings will choose different districts based on the needs and wants of the individual student. This increasing trend continues to make local headlines as parents attempt to find the best fit for their child. For example, *The Goshen News* had an article in 2014 discussing the desire of a family in Middlebury, Indiana that was utilizing open enrollment as a school choice option. Open enrollment allows students to transfer school districts and attend any school that they choose. The Middlebury family chose to send their daughter to Fairfield High School because it was a smaller school. The son chose to attend Northridge High School because it offered more programs, including Chinese language courses (Crothers, 2014).

The ability to choose a school outside of the district where a student lives is a newer concept in Indiana and more families are embracing it; as demonstrated above, some families make different choices to suit the individual needs of each student. As students and parents utilize school choice, some schools are experiencing large shifts in population. For example, Concord Community Schools in Elkhart County added almost 400 students from 2013-2014 (Crothers, 2014). The increase was viewed as positive, but Superintendent Wayne Stubbs cautioned that with the large increase in students comes concerns for class sizes, transportation, other programs (Crothers, 2014). Now districts can compete for students and marketing a district

is a way to attract new students. A 2014 *Goshen News* article states that Goshen Community Schools recently approved the use of \$49,700, a reduction of 42% from the previous year, for next school year towards a renewed marketing campaign (Kline, 2019). When districts have large numbers of students transfer in or out of the district, it may create unintended consequences including the gain or loss of state revenue.

This particular subject of open enrollment is an interest to me as a high school principal of 15 years. Anecdotally, I have observed the change from the days of parents paying tuition to attend school in another district, to no tuition and principals denying transfer, to the current system of wide-open enrollment (unless there are discipline or attendance issues). One district in our athletic conference is getting ready to close due to declining enrollment. Another nearby district is closing two elementary schools and my current district is preparing for a wave of transfers from there. At my current district, 11.6% of the students attending are from out of the district (Christner, personal communication, 2019).

The financial impact of students transferring across district lines can be devastating. Goshen Community Schools had a net loss of \$2.5 million for the 2015 school year and Elkhart Community Schools lost almost \$10 million in tuition from the state in 2016 (Sokol, 2016). In addition, Muncie Community has 2,000 students from that district enrolled in nearby districts which is about \$10 million per year (Indiana Department of Education, 2018). Districts are losing out on millions of dollars per year. If these districts do not make quick reductions and cuts to the budget, they face financial bankruptcy.

Public Law 146 of 2008 allowed students to transfer across district lines and there are no costs to the parents associated with the switching of districts. The new law emphasized open enrollment as a school choice option for parents to have their child educated at the school they

believe best meets the needs of that child. This allowed students to transfer in large numbers between districts in Indiana by making open enrollment a new option for families. The original intent of the law was to change tax structures and how funds were collected by the state for schools.

Statement of the Problem

The parental option of open enrollment has created a culture of fluidity regarding student enrollment in districts in the State of Indiana. When districts experience large numbers of students transferring in or out, there are consequences that ultimately impact the district. To date, there is no known published research related to how open enrollment policies have influenced school districts in Indiana. The district Education Fund receives state funding based on student enrollment. As enrollment increases, the funding also increases. When enrollment declines, funding declines. There are only two ways for a district to increase revenue: a referendum to increase local property tax rates or to increase enrollment.

It is unclear if Indiana districts have been able to provide high quality education while managing enrollment fluctuations. Also unknown is how these open enrollment policies changed the district demographics, if at all. How have superintendents adjusted district programs and policies based upon the impact of transfers in their districts? Superintendents are poised to be reliable informants as they manage these changes when it comes to staffing, programming, providing high quality instruction, and marketing their districts.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this dissertation was to collect superintendent perceptions related to the influence of the transfer of students and funds in Indiana school districts. Public Law 146 of 2008 allows students to transfer to any district that takes transfer students each year. If

significant numbers of students transfer across district lines, potentially large amounts of money fluctuates between districts. As district enrollment increases, funding increases and as enrollment declines, so does funding from the State. Superintendents make decisions for their district based upon the amount of money in the Education Fund. When students are seen as an economic function of thousands of dollars per child, large numbers of students transferring out could have a devastating effect on districts. Likewise, an influx of new students can also provide challenges to a district.

This study examined superintendent perceptions of the influence that law had on school finance, school programming, staffing, and demographics as significant numbers of students transferred in and out of districts. Three important questions guided this study:

1. How do Indiana superintendents perceive the effects of open enrollment in relation to: finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts?
2. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts related to district contexts?
3. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, climate, program quality, staffing, marketing, and demographic changes related to their disposition of wanting to attract students?

Significance of the Study

This study of the superintendent perceptions on open enrollment in Indiana is a significant and timely topic. Superintendents are uniquely positioned to see the short term and long term effects of shifting student populations. There is limited research available related specifically to the perceptions of Indiana public school superintendents about this issue. The current legislation is in the tenth year of implementation and as indicated by newspaper articles

stated above, it seems many schools have been impacted by the unintended consequences of the law; yet there is little systemic study of this topic. As students transfer, it may decrease the Education Fund of districts that lose large numbers of transfer students. Conversely, other districts are gaining large numbers of students, creating districts with a substantial increase in Education Fund money. After many years of student population shifts, the phenomena of students switching among the districts may create long term effects on each district's Education Fund budget.

Delimitations

The research for this study only focused on open enrollment as a public school choice option in Indiana. Some of the research in the literature review focused on other states and vouchers, but the narrow purpose of this study only focused on Indiana public school choice. Indiana has been developing aggressive policies related to school choice options and this research will only study open enrollment as an option. Schools are competing for students as a way to increase funding.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms and definitions should be considered when reading this document.

1. **Charter School-** "Charter schools are public schools that operate with freedom from many of the local and state regulations that apply to traditional public schools. Charter schools allow parents, community leaders, educational entrepreneurs, and others the flexibility to innovate and provide students with increased educational options within the public school system. Charter schools are sponsored by local, state, or other

organizations that monitor their quality while holding them accountable for academic results and responsible fiscal practices (United States Department of Education, 2014).

2. **Education Fund-** This was formerly the General Fund under the old rules for school finance in Indiana. “The governing body of each school corporation shall establish and education fund for the payment of expenses that are allocated to student instruction and learning under IC 20-42.5” (IC 20-40-2-2, 2018). This account is used for expenses related to instruction and does not levy property taxes.
3. **Inter-district transfer-** A form of school choice that allows students to transfer to another nearby district and the tuition support from the state travels with that student to the receiving district (Carlson, Lavery, & Witte, 2011).
4. **Intra-district transfer-** A form of school choice that allows students to transfer to any school within the district (California Department of Education, 2014).
5. **Open Enrollment-** This is a form of school choice where students are allowed to transfer to any public school they choose. This process increases the number of options for parents to choose and therefore expands the educational marketplace (Herrmann et al., 2009).
6. **Magnet Schools-** “Magnet schools are designed to attract students from diverse social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. They focus on a specific subject, such as science or the arts; follow specific themes, such as business/technology or communications/humanities/law; or operate according to certain models, such as career academies or a school-within-a-school” (United States Department of Education, 2014).

7. **School Choice**- "...broadly defined as any alternative to traditional public education that provides parents a degree of discretion in the selection of the school their children will attend" (Herrmann, Burroughs, & Plucker, 2009, pg. 1).
8. **Vouchers**- "A voucher provides either publicly or privately financed money, sometimes called scholarships, to students who want to attend out-of-district public or private schools (often religious) schools" (Walls, 2003, p. 3).

Summary

Parents have long held the belief that they know what is best when it comes to the education of their child. Throughout America's history, there have been reform movements that seek to improve the existing educational institution. Politicians often include education reform in their platforms and seek to pass legislation that makes improvement possible. The launch of Sputnik and the publication of *A Nation At Risk* spurred reform movements the past 50 years. As politicians push reform platforms, several options of reform are often discussed. School choice is one such policy idea that has gained popularity in Indiana. Within the realm of school choice is the policy of open enrollment.

The purpose of this dissertation was to collect, examine, and summarize the perceptions of Indiana public school superintendents related to the financial impact of open enrollment. As significant numbers of students transfer among districts, the money that follows those students has unintended consequences on local districts. Chapter Two of this dissertation discusses the literature review and focused on the theoretical framework, background of school choice, politics and policy of choice, financial impact, school policy in the courts, policy development, and attracting and retaining students. Chapter Three previews the methods used in the study, including, sample description, instrument development, data collection, data analysis, and

limitations. Chapter Four presents the data collected from the survey instrument. Chapter Five summarizes the findings of the research and presented those findings along with conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to examine superintendent perceptions of the influence of school choice in the state of Indiana. Specifically, the dissertation examined open enrollment where students transfer across district lines without the need for payment of tuition. The purpose of this literature review was to develop a clearer understanding of school choice and how it is utilized in the American educational system. School choice was reviewed at the national level and then at the state level for specific context and what happens in Indiana public schools.

This literature review provides a broad spectrum of information related to school choice across the United States. This review frames the context of characterizing school choice as a free market approach to public education. Numerous states have implemented school choice over the past 40 years; this study summarizes examples from several states, but not every state is discussed in this review. In the literature review, I first discuss the theoretical framework of free markets as related to education. Second, school choice is defined through discussions of the history and origins. Third, I explain the politics and policy related to school choice. Finally, the effects of school choice on demographic stratification, financial issues, and retaining students are detailed.

Open enrollment in the state of Indiana is a relatively recent concept that has only been in place since 2008 with the passage of Public Law 146 which eliminated the need for parents to pay transfer tuition. In addition, the state changed the funding of public schools from local

property tax money to state collected sales tax money (Herrman, Burroughs, & Plucker, 2009). Currently, Indiana offers open enrollment as one of two methods of school choice offered to parents and students. In Indiana, “The school choice option of open enrollment has yet to be rigorously evaluated, resulting in differing opinions about its potential advantages and disadvantages” (Herrman, Burroughs, & Plucker, 2009, p. 1). This dissertation collected the perceptions of superintendents regarding the open enrollment in Indiana public schools, which will respond to Herrman et al.’s call for evaluations.

The transfer of substantial numbers of students to other districts creates a flow of funds because money follows those students. Indiana superintendents generally desire additional funding from the state and never seem to get enough funding to meet the demands of inflation and growing costs. Ultimately, students have a financial value.

When students transfer, the money follows the student to the district where that child is newly enrolled. There are count days when enrollment is submitted to the state and funding is based upon that number. As districts lose students in large numbers, those districts are effected by deficit spending cycles that can be difficult to correct in a timely manner. As of 2018, Indiana schools receive \$5,088 per student through the Foundation Grant tuition support from the state of Indiana (Indiana Department of Education, 2018). When students transfer in and out of districts, the money follows where they go. Superintendents in districts with large numbers of transfers in or out managed the unintended consequences of shifting finances. Superintendents planned and implemented changes to meet the staffing and programming demands of large shifts in population and finances. Three important research questions related to this are:

1. How do Indiana superintendents perceive the effects of open enrollment in relation to: finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts?

2. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts related to district contexts?
3. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, climate, program quality, staffing, marketing, and demographic changes related to their disposition of wanting to attract students?

Some districts are already implementing programs and policies to address these questions. This dissertation compiled superintendent perceptions based on intended and unintended consequences of open enrollment.

As the lead decision makers in the districts, superintendents are tasked with managing the funds, the personnel, and they assist the school board with creating policy. The recent changes in open enrollment in Indiana have created a system where students are switching schools across district lines. Districts made adjustments due to the shifting populations and finances, which affects district policies, programming, and funding. How do the superintendents and districts address the shift in students and shift in tuition support? The literature review does not focus on private schools, charter schools, or school vouchers. Vouchers are mentioned within the research and literature review of this dissertation; however, the purpose of this study is to only examine open enrollment in Indiana, and vouchers are excluded in this process. Vouchers are briefly discussed due to the amount of funding Indiana puts towards that program. The research databases used for this review were ERIC (EBSCO), Google Scholar, Academic Premier, and Web of Science. ERIC (EBSCO) tended to find older articles from the 1970s and 1990s while Web of Science found articles within the past 15 years. Academic Premier was also a valuable asset in finding recent peer reviewed articles about school choice. Google Scholar provided recent articles from the past 10 years.

Theoretical Framework – Free Markets

The theoretical framework for this study is the free market business model as it applies to public education. Milton Friedman (1962) first suggested applying the free market concept to public education. The free market systems allow for consumer choices and competition between agencies. Friedman proposed free choice for schools and the use of vouchers as a way to invest in human capital, arguing that investing in human capital creates a skilled workforce, capable of creating economic growth in America. The free market concept was then applied to the ability of parents to choose what they believed was the best educational option for their child, this also gave parents a choice out of poor performing local schools.

A main economic principle in the United States is having a choice in what consumers use and thus, creating a free market where competition allows those choices (Friedman, 1962). When applying the free market theory to schools, students (parents) should be able to pick and choose the school that performs the best and they should not have to attend the local school or the school that they have been assigned to if they decide there are better options. At the time of this study, there has been an increase in states around the country that offer school choice as an educational improvement option. Currently, over 29 states have some form of school choice options such as open enrollment, vouchers, and tax incentives (EdChoice.org, 2017). By utilizing the free market model, parents are able to choose what they consider to be the best school for their child.

The free market concept intended to create competition among schools, thus forcing schools to improve if they wanted to maintain a competitive edge. Schools are forced to change or improve in order to attract and retain students in their district (Herrmann et al., 2009). Competition drives the business model; therefore, according to proponents of school choice,

competition and free market principles can be applied to schools as a mechanism for improvement.

Through this process, some districts are gaining vast numbers of students and some schools are losing vast numbers of students. Districts with increasing enrollment have issues with staffing and planning/programming. Districts that are experiencing declining enrollment lose financing and support, ultimately leading to their demise if they do not take corrective actions. Both situations can present intended and unintended consequences for school districts. Superintendents are faced with making difficult decisions based on enrollment trends.

The concept of school choice is justified by many political groups and stakeholders. For example, conservatives and capitalists argue for school choice based on the free market concept. Liberals and social integrationists who want to make education equal for all, argue that school choice creates a more equitable learning environment for all students (Vittereti, Walberg, & Wolf, 2005). Finally, parents and teachers like the concept of school choice because their students have access to high performing schools and better programs tailored to specific student needs (Smith, 1995). In the late 1980s, President George H. W. Bush was a proponent of school choice because it was a free market idea that could possibly increase parental involvement in the educational process (Graham & Ruhl, 1990).

Proponents of school choice believe choosing schools is a great equalizer. Politicians believe that allowing parents more options for school choice is paramount to a democratic society. Because of that, school choice allows parents to find the best education for their child and makes access to education equal for all students. Having school choice options can be seen as a liberating tool for parents away from low performing schools as they access the free-market approach to public education (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Proponents of this model argue there is no

equality in education unless there is competition (Coons & Sugarman, 1978). The intent is to create competition where schools are forced to improve in order to attract and retain students. In addition, parents want the best education for their child and some are willing to break the law, some have even been prosecuted and found guilty of theft for enrolling their student in nearby districts. This is how desperate some parents are for their child to receive a high quality education (Malugade, 2014). Thus, various stakeholders argued the greatest equalizer of education in America is school choice.

The collection of superintendent perceptions of open enrollment will seek to validate whether or not the free market as applied to education is truly appropriate. This dissertation will collect, review, and discuss superintendent perceptions of this policy on districts. In this system, there are districts viewed as winners and districts viewed as losers when it comes to the number of students gained or lost. Schools are a reflection of the local communities in Indiana. As districts lose students and finances, it influences how those communities are perceived. Superintendents as local leaders have a tremendous influence on local communities. Superintendents want what is best for their district, but open enrollment has created an atmosphere of competition that may or may not benefit the districts. Should a district be so attractive that it attracts enough students from a nearby district which forces the other district to cut staffing, programs, or even dissolve as a corporation?

School Choice Explained

School Choice Background

Prior to the American Revolution, early education in the colonies consisted of students attending local and autonomous schools financed by churches and local communities. There was little formal organization by any regulating agency. Many independent schools were replaced by

free public schools, which were overseen by local and state governments after the Revolutionary War (Carpenter & Kafer, 2012). Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, schools became compulsory and were tax-supported by states. These new schools were called common-schools.

Common schools were quasi-public, originally mandated by colonial, and subsequently by state and governments. They offered an elementary level of schooling...characterized by rote learning, harsh discipline, and delivery of patriotic and Protestant messages (uslegal.com, 2014).

In these early days, all children were expected to attend at least a few years of minimal schooling. Some of the earliest concepts of private school choice began because many rules and policies within state and local government were sectarian in nature, mainly Christian (Carpenter & Kafer, 2012). Local schools were often influenced by the strong Protestant beliefs of the local community.

At the turn of the 20th century, Catholics believed that the Protestant based schools contradicted with their own beliefs and began to form private schools controlled by the local church (Carpenter & Kafer, 2012). At this point, Catholic families had a choice in where they could send their child to school. This was the start of the modern school choice movement in America. In these cases, it was religious beliefs that spawned this movement.

Over the next 50 years more Christian schools, Jewish schools, and independent private schools were used as school choice options for parents. The creation of private schools was a slow growth movement and has been an option for parents the past hundred years (Carpenter & Kafer, 2012). Parents were seeking alternative places for education and they often prefer religious based institutions (Carpenter & Kafer, 2012).

By the late 1800s as Catholic schools increased in numbers and influence, the Catholic education reformers began to push for the use of public funding for private schools. United States Representative James Blaine of Maine used anti-Catholic sentiment to attempt to prohibit the use of public funds for private education. He attempted to pass a Constitutional amendment, which eventually failed. However, his efforts succeeded in requiring that all new states added to the Union must include provisions for public education and the use of federal land grant money for the support of public schools (Carpenter & Kafer, 2012).

These new laws were meant to support public schools, although they were often Protestant in nature, and prevented the use of the public resources for Catholic education (Carpenter & Kafer, 2012). The idea was that governmental funds could not be used to support private (religious) institutions. Thirty-seven states have Blaine Amendments which prohibit funding of non-public schools, colleges, hospitals, etc. (Carpenter & Kafer, 2012).

These religious school options for parents created a new concept of choice and therefore parents were able to apply the free market theory to education. This created the need for public schools to reform in order to attract and retain students that were lost to private education. Historically, there have been court cases that upheld the rights of families and religious organizations to have school choice. These are discussed later in this literature review.

Superintendents' Understanding of School Choice

With all of this change over the past 40 years in public education, superintendents are in the position to attract students by understanding these factors that are a predictor of school choice. Superintendent thoughts and opinions are important to understand how they address the needs of students that utilize school choice. Perceptive superintendents understand policy and practice through their own self-efficacy and the role it plays in student achievement (Whitt,

Sheurich & Skria, 2015). A districts attract or lose students, superintendents need to adapt. Currey, MacPherson, & Schorr (1992) polled 98 superintendents in Washington State and found that a majority supported school choice because of the opportunities it offered all students, especially superintendents in districts with higher dropout rates.

Early studies of school choice that collected superintendent opinions showed that very few changes were made to teaching styles, instructional innovation, course offerings, or financial resources (Rubenstein et al., 1992). However, over time, the superintendents understood that changes would have to be made to programming and planning in order to accommodate transfer students. Even if superintendents agree or disagree with the advantages of school choice, Graham and Ruhl (1990) found from their study in Iowa, Arkansas, and Minnesota that 52% of superintendents agree that school choice is an overall American freedom.

Superintendents are seeing ever growing populations of their students being out of district. America's largest state, California, has 20% of its students utilizing choice (Morris, 2013). As superintendents wrestle to accept or refuse school choice as an important part of education reform, many agree that it has its drawbacks. As bureaucracies force schools to improve, the superintendents are the people getting the blame for the needed change (Abernathy, 2005).

Concepts such as collaboration, support, and professionalism that were exercised in the past have now created a competition and those concepts are diminishing between some districts (Howe et al., 2002; Jimerson, 1998; Jimerson, 2002). When schools and districts no longer act professionally or collegially, the students may suffer. It is up to school leaders to set aside differences and work to improve education while being open to innovation, communication, and collaboration from other administrators.

Small schools are finding it difficult to compete with large schools due to resources and programming (Jimerson, 1998). The public often views open enrollment as having little effects on districts and the perception is that it is harmless (Jimerson, 2002). So which districts are effected by school choice? Superintendents of small districts (less than 4,000 students) opposed choice in a 1998 study in the state of Washington. In another study, the larger districts viewed school choice favorably because it offered more opportunities for students (Currey, et al., 1992; (Welsch et al., 2009). The large school districts may be able to help small schools by offering assistance or options for shared programing. Ultimately, it is up to the school administrators to understand their schools and how free market principles can be used to attract students rather than lose students.

The school choice programs have created schools that are more desirable or more highly sought after than others. Districts which have become the best recruiters are aware of the characteristics of both sending and receiving districts. Fossey (1994) concluded in his research on why families opt for school choice in Massachusetts that 1) receiving districts had higher socioeconomic status of their students by almost \$14,000 per year, 2) receiving districts had more adults in the community with college degrees, 3) receiving districts generally had higher per pupil expenditures, 4) senior level standardized test scores were higher in Mathematics and English than the sending district, 5) sending districts had higher dropout rates, and 6) sending districts had higher suspension rates. These findings are similar in many districts across the country. Generally, higher performing and higher socioeconomic schools attract higher performing and higher socioeconomic status students (Howe, et al., 2002; Welsch et al., 2009). Parents understand these characteristics of schools when they utilize their school choice option in the free market system.

Parental Reasons for School Choice

School choice gives parents options. Currently, 46 states have some policies that address open enrollment as one form of school choice (Education Commission of the United States, 2018). School choice is an option and although many parents view school choice as a positive approach, however, there are still limited numbers of students who use the option (Boyd, Hare, & Nathan, 2002).

As parents choose to have their student transfer, it is not always for academic reasons. Ni and Arsen (2011) found parents did not use academic effectiveness as a reason to transfer. In fact, schools with high transfer-in rates only had test scores on 4th grade math and English that were 3-4% higher than the sending school. The authors did not find this to be a significant reason for utilizing choice. According to Ni and Arsen (2011) it is socioeconomic factors that influence school choice. Parents see other benefits of school choice beyond academics. School choice options may better meet family needs and values, have more meaningful social impacts, and/or programming matches family ideals (Ni & Arsen, 2011).

Modern School Choice Movement

The push for modern public school choice started in the early 1960s and was first implemented in Minnesota in the early 1970s. When Minnesota first began its school choice policies, only 20% of parents who participated in it did so for academic reasons (Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department, 1990). Two early school choice programs in Minneapolis Public Schools were very specific about which students were able to be part of a school choice program that made vouchers available for parents. The Chapter 220 law allowed students to use school choice unless they were special needs, bilingual, truant, or behavioral problems. Thus, it eliminated numerous students who could have benefitted from being in a

higher performing or a higher socioeconomic school. The other Minnesota program was called Parental Choice and it served students with special needs and learning disability status. Chapter 220 parents were more likely have higher socioeconomic status and were two-parent homes while the Parental Choice program included students from lower socioeconomic status and single-parent homes (Witte & Thorn, 1996).

The research indicated that parents were not necessarily using school choice because they were escaping poor performing schools. It was a factor, but not a main factor. Parents were not transferring schools because of poor teachers or poor schools (Welsch, Statz, & Skidmore, 2009). In Wisconsin, Welsch et al. (2009) learned that the biggest factor for student transfers in to a district was if there was high per pupil expenditures. Districts with high per pupil expenditures are more attractive to families. The schools that gain the most students have a higher tax base and higher per pupil expenditures, which gives that district the ability to offer more or better programs. The fact that schools spend more money because they are a wealthier school often times is more attractive to parents than the higher academic scores. Reback (2008) found that students typically transferred to schools with higher test scores and higher socioeconomic characteristics. As parents used choice for their child, they picked schools that seem to have more advantages than their local school.

Since the 1990s, school choice policies across the country have changed to allow all students to transfer based upon parental concerns. When the school choice policies in Ohio allowed for all parents to have school choice as an option, the more popular and affluent schools became the choice for transferring in students and the less popular schools became even more ineffective (Wronkovich et al., 1998). When large numbers of students left the schools, they had to cut staff, cut programming, and even close schools. The parents opted to leave schools in

Ohio based on programming, convenience, negative perceptions of the local schools, violence, gangs, and other problems. Typically, parents who use school choice were attempting to leave the problems in their local area (Wronkovich et al., 1998). These issues are typical of why many parents feel the need to exercise their right to utilize school choice. Additional reasons for parents to use school choice will be discussed later in this chapter.

The number of states and students using school choice has grown significantly in the past 20 years and the number will likely increase based on policy initiatives. Inter-district and intra-district choice nationwide is used by 5.95 million students or about 12% of the public school age children (Jones-Sanpei, 2008). Between 1993 and 2007, students attending their local districts dropped from 80% to 73% (Grady & Bielik, 2010). A 2012 study by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) stated that 13% of students in public schools utilized school choice for their current placement. The study found that 40% of White students were in schools of choice compared to only 22% and 27% of Black and Hispanic students were enrolled in a public school of choice respectively (NCES, 2016). As additional options become available, students may continue to leave public schools and seek these options such as private schools, magnet schools, or charter schools.

When minority parents became users of school choice, they often based their decisions on what options are best for their child according to what the receiving school offered. Ni and Arson (2011) found that parents who chose to utilize choice only saw 3-4% increases on standardized test scores. Rubenstein, Hamar, and Adelman (1992) concluded that minority parents often used school choice for child care and extra-curricular offerings while White parents utilized school choice based on the proximity of the schools to the parents' workplace. In contrast to earlier studies, both minority and White parents in the Rubenstein et al. (1992) study

agreed that academic achievement was the most important factor for utilizing school choice. Welsch et al. (2009) found that parents are leaving for higher spending and higher achieving districts. Often times, the choice to leave relates to school financial health and ability to offer more extracurricular programs (Howe, Eisenhart, & Betenner, 2002; Welsch et al., 2009).

School Choice as a Reform

The concept of educational reform has evolved past few decades in the United States. One of the prevalent models of educational reform has been the option for parents to choose whichever school they would like their child to attend within a reasonable distance from their home. This reform idea is called school choice. School choice is the overarching umbrella idea and within school choice are several options. These options include open enrollment, vouchers, inter-district transfer, and intra-district transfer. These concepts will be further developed in the next few paragraphs.

School choice has a variety of options including private schools, magnet schools, charter schools, or open enrollment. Private schools are often owned by religious institutions and are managed by their own governing board or body. Magnet schools are part of the local district but have a specific focus such as science, technology, or engineering (Chen, 2014). A charter school is a public school, governed by an organization such as a university or municipal entity or charter management organization (CMO), rather than a traditional school board. The CMO sets up the business plan of accountability of the charter school and limits the amount of rules and regulation for the school. School administrators are given freedom to implement programming and instructional methods. The success of the charter is based upon student achievement gains at the school. A typical charter school is a mix between traditional public schooling and a private school and it is funded by public tax dollars (Chen, 2014).

Students have two options to switch public schools. Inter-district transfers allow students to move across district boundaries (Carlson, Lavery, & Witte, 2011). Another example is intra-district transfers where students can transfer to any school within the district (California Department of Education, 2014). Intra-district transfers often occur in larger urban areas where the local district has many different elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. School choice can be described as “...any alternative to traditional public education that provides parents a degree of discretion in the selection of the school their children will attend” (Herrman et al., 2009, p. 1).

School Choice Under *No Child Left Behind*. School choice was one of the main tenets of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). This was the new education policy under President George W. Bush. When congress rewrote the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* in 2001, school choice was written as an option for parents to pull their children from failing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). When schools were found to be ineffective and need improvement under NCLB, their leadership had to provide options of school choice for students (New America Foundation, 2004). This policy at the national level may have pushed states to be more aggressive in school choice policies.

Under NCLB, the rates for transferring students declined greatly the past few years. In 2005, when the first year students transferred out of failing schools, almost 50,000 students opted to switch schools. However, eight years later, only 27,000 students transferred out of failing schools (Aldeman, 2015). This is why Congress and the Obama administration no longer considered school choice as a major tenant of the NCLB rewrite in what is now *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) (Aldeman, 2015).

Table 2.1**Students Transferred Under NCLB (Aldeman, 2015)**

Year	Numbers
2005	48,000
2009	165,000 (peak)
2013	27,125

Every Student Succeeds Act. The reauthorization of the NCLB in 2015, called Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is relatively silent on school choice. The federal responsibility of choice is pushed back to the state and local governments as these entities make policy for the transfer of students and funds (Burke & Corona, 2016). This has limited the ability of the federal government to expand school choice options for parents. One point the Friedman Foundation for educational reform makes is that federal Title I money should also be portable for students and follow them to their school of choice (Burke & Corona, 2016). In addition, the Foundation hoped that these funds could follow students to private schools. An amendment to the original bill allowed for the transfer of Title I funds to private schools, but it was tabled (Burke & Corona, 2016). In essence, the new ESSA does not further enhance existing school choice via federal regulations. These decisions are left to state and local governments.

Parent Perceptions of Educational Choice

As parents are empowered with school choice, they have the ability to increase involvement in their child's education. Local programs for choice gained increased popularity over traditional public schools and a National Center for Education Statistics Report indicates that parents are becoming increasingly aware of choice options (Tice, 2006). Just as presidents have promoted school choice, so have other organizations and political groups. The National

Governors' Association has advocated that parental involvement is essential to the educational reform movement (Riddle & Stedman, 1989).

A Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup poll in 2007 indicated nationally 51% of parents favored some form of school choice if the government provided tuition assistance while 48% opposed it (Rose & Gallup, 2007). The trend indicates nationally that the public is open to the idea of choice. School choice is a tool parents can use to put their child in what they believe is the best possible educational setting. However, when parents exercise the right to choose, it impacts the local district. As the student transfers out of the district, the money leaves that district and is sent to the receiving district. Therefore, when large numbers of students transfer, large amounts of funding also shifts from district to district.

Parent Perception of School Choice in Indiana

If parents are not satisfied or believe that the district has a low quality educational program, they are more likely to use school choice as an option. A 2009 study in Indiana by the *Center for Evaluation & Education Policy* (CEEP) found that 65% of parents utilizing school choice were "very satisfied" with their choice while only 56% of parents whose child was in a local public school were satisfied (Herrmann et al., 2009). The results indicate parents using the option of school choice are more pleased than their traditional public school counterparts in Indiana.

Financial Impact of School Choice Nationally

As parents embrace the free market model for educating their child, there are long term effects on the finances of both the sending and receiving school. The free market system when applied to schools, does not affect all districts and all students the same. When a school loses too

many students, they have to cut staff and cut programming. This in turn has a strong, negative impact on the remaining students at that school (Jabbar, 2015; Jabbar, 2016; Jimerson, 1998).

As states struggle to allocate money for education, school reformers will continue to push for school choice options because the money follows the student (Carlson et al., 2011; Lamdin & Mintrom, 1997). There are limited resources and districts struggle for every dollar. When Ohio adopted school choice plans they had three options 1) spend less and increase student outcomes through professional development, 2) spend the same and increase student outcomes in schools, or 3) increase funding while increasing productivity. They had to choose option 2 because there was no new money and no increases in taxes to help schools improve (Fowler, 1994). In Minnesota, during the 2003-2004 school year, Minneapolis Public Schools had 6,359 students transfer out of the district. That equated to a revenue loss of \$28 million. This had a dramatic effect on the schools that lost large numbers of students and poor schools continued to have difficulty improving due to a lack of resources (Carlson et al., 2011).

Districts that add higher numbers of students have additional dollars to spend as needed. They are able to increase programming, hire new staff, and typically become more financially stable. The schools that gain the most students are often schools that have a higher per pupil expenditures than the sending school (Carlson et al., 2011; Welsch et al., 2009). Conversely, schools that have high per pupil expenditures tend to have lower transfer rates out of the district. The losses and gains for each building of each district can have a tremendous impact. For instance, Rubenstein et al (1992) stated two cases where one elementary school lost \$430,000 in revenue and had to be shut down due to a lack of funds. Yet, in another small district, they were able to hire five new teachers because of the large influx of transfer students. Sometimes, the

continued existence of the school depended on whether they lose or gain large numbers of students.

Researchers have found that when special education students transfer, additional dollars flow in and out of school systems. Students with individual education plans get additional dollars for programming to meet their educational needs. If the receiving school does not have a program for that student, they incur a greater cost trying to meet the needs of an Individualized Education Plan. The sending school then loses the money and it may be a burden for the sending school to maintain that program if too much revenue is lost (Lange, Ysseldyke, & Delaney, 1995). When the students transfer schools the money also leaves. When that happens, schools adapt and plan for losses or gains in revenue. This makes the planning and programming for schools a difficult task. School districts must be cognizant of the students that leave and the students that stay and work to improve the education of all students (Wells, 1990).

Current Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has developed a pilot program for federal dollars to follow students that use school choice. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 50 districts nationally are allowed to transfer all the funds applied to an individual student including Title 1 funds, English Language Learners, and special education dollars (Klein, 2018). This makes the funding of students more individualized rather than based on a state's general per pupil funding amount. It allows all the money provided for that child at the current district to flow to the receiving district.

Financial Impact of Open Enrollment in Indiana

The financial impact of school districts in Indiana has been significant and superintendents are left dealing with the unintended consequences as large numbers of students transfer. The influence of these consequences is the basis of this study.

School funding in Indiana is split into various funds, the Education Fund and the Operation Fund. The money that follows the student comes from the State of Indiana and it supports the district's Education Fund, which goes towards salaries, benefits, and day-to-day instructional costs. The Operation Fund includes transportation, utilities, non-classroom staff, and all other costs not directly related to instruction. The amount a school receives is based upon the number of students enrolled in the district. Pupil enrollment numbers are collected by the state on September 15th of each year. State tuition support is adjusted according to enrollment collected on the count day. This became the amount of revenue based upon a formula called the basic grant. The basic grant amount for 2018 was \$5,088 (Indiana Department of Education, 2018). This is the money that schools lose if a student transfers to another district. The money then, flows in and out of a district, based upon pupil enrollment. In addition, any additional funds related to the Complexity formula for free/reduced lunch students, special education funds, and funding for English Language Learners is lost.

By examining Elkhart County, prime examples of the shifts in funding are evident. Elkhart Community Schools saw as much as \$10 million leave the district for the 2015-2016 school year as students transferred to one of six other nearby districts (Sokol, 2016). Similarly, Goshen Community Schools in Elkhart County lost almost \$2.5 million in funding as they had a net loss of students for the year. The Goshen Community Schools Superintendent stated that schools need to question what they are doing and how they are creating the best programming that prepares students for the 21st Century (Sokol, 2016). The largest enrollment increases in Elkhart County are Concord Community Schools, with a net gain of \$2.4 million, and Middlebury Community Schools, with a gain of about \$810,000 (Sokol, 2016).

Other districts in Indiana have suffered tremendous losses in funding due to declining enrollment. Muncie Community Schools has 2,000 fewer students per year who attend school at neighboring districts, which equates to \$10 million transferring to other districts (Fall 2017-2018 Public Corporation Transfer Report, 2018). Indianapolis Public Schools have over 20,000 students per year transfer out to other districts (Fall 2017-2018 Public Corporation Transfer Report, 2018). Almost \$100,000,000 is no longer part of that district and instead gets dispersed to multiple neighboring districts.

However, students transferring into a district are not necessarily covering all the cost the school incurs for that student. For example, the Transportation Fund, Debt Services Fund, and Capital Projects Fund are all paid by local property tax levies (Digest of Public School Finance in Indiana, 2013). These funds are now combined into the Operation Fund in Indiana. When a student lives out of district, his or her parents are not paying local property taxes that go to the attending district (Christner, personal communication, 2016). The school district then, through policies and programming, is affected by inter-district transfers when significant numbers of students transfer.

The Impact of Vouchers

By 2011, reformers throughout the country had set ambitious goals to offer parents as many choices as possible when it comes to public education for children. This caused many public schools to reconsider operations (Butcher, 2013). As of 2011, 18 states had vouchers allowing students to utilize private schools in the school choice process (Burke & Scheffield, 2011). Vouchers are the use of state funds to offset student tuition at a private school. Giving parents tax money for private schools is one more option of school choice afforded to them in many states.

Indiana has the largest voucher program in the nation with 36,290 students for the 2018-2019 school year (Cavazos, 2019). As the voucher program expands, so does the overall cost to the state. In previous years, research on voucher programs in Indiana suggests that vouchers save the state money because the amount of money for a voucher is less than that of per pupil expenditures. For example, in the 2013-2014 school year, the state spent \$4 million fewer dollars on those students (Prothero, 2015). Vouchers might only be granted up to 50% of the money a student would normally receive to attend a public school. However, newly relaxed laws on student eligibility for vouchers indicates that students who never attended or planned to attend public schools are now eligible for voucher money. Families can now get 50%, 70%, and 100% state tuition for private school costs (Cavazos, 2019). Thus, it is probable that state funding for vouchers would increase. Students attending private schools can apply for vouchers to help offset tuition. The amount of the voucher often is based upon a family's income according to the level of poverty in the state. A family of four in Indiana that makes less than \$47,638 is eligible for 100% of the voucher money, if that family makes under \$95,275 they can get 50% of a voucher (Choice Scholarship Program, 2019). Families can use that money to offset tuition costs at private schools.

States Increase School Choice Options

Many states are shifting to a trend of adding more options that parents can use as their options of school choice. By 2017, 29 states had multiple forms of school choice including; vouchers, open enrollment, or tax incentives for private education (EdChoice.org, 2017). More states added school choice and all 50 states had some form of choice by 2019 (School Mint, 2019). The Wall Street Journal (2011) noted the high number of states with school choice laws enacted or revised during the year in 2011 increased so much that they published an article

calling it “The Year of School Choice.” Many states previously had some form of choice and then the legislatures in those states passed additional laws expanding school choice options. In other parts of the country such as Washington D. C., Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and Ohio, states passed new reforms or enhanced existing legislation to further the school choice movement (Butcher, 2013). States were trying to improve educational options for all students and current trends indicate increased expansion of options for school choice.

In Wisconsin, the law allowing for inter-district transfers began in 1997. A total of 2,464 students took advantage of inter-district transfers and \$9.6 million in pupil funding transferred between districts. By 2013, 41,562 had students had optioned for school choice state-wide. A total of \$242.8 million in pupil funding shifted among the Wisconsin school districts in 2013 (Malugade, 2014). In Wisconsin alone, over the past 17 years, billions of dollars have shifted across district lines based on school choice options for students. This shift in money has consequences for those districts, which have large losses or large gains of students. With the large amount of tax dollars being spent on schools, district leaders will continue to plan for the large shifts of money in the future.

Because of the growing numbers of students utilizing school choice, administrators will want to know what they can do to adapt their school or district to meet the needs of these learners, and the desires of the parents. The number of students attending local schools in 1993 was about 80%. In 2007, that number had decreased to 69%, with about 15% using school choice and the rest choosing homeschool and private school (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009). As options increase, more students may be pulled from public education as a way to use the free market system.

School Choice and Student Achievement

Although school choice seems to be an accepted free market concept, does it have a relationship with student achievement? That association varies depending on the empirical study. Many proponents of school choice contend that utilizing school choice will improve academic achievement. However, research on academic achievement based on public school choice is inconclusive. “As yet, existing empirical studies permit no firm conclusions regarding the effects of school choice policies on student achievement and efficiency in traditional public schools” (Arsen & Ni, 2008, p. 16). Belfield and Levin (2002, 2005) found through a meta-analysis of educational outcomes that school choice leads to improved quality in education because educational outcomes are typically higher in areas where there is increased school competition. However, Belfield and Levin (2002) concluded that school choice increased student achievement by .16 SD. Belfield and Levin (2005) found that an increase in competition for students and higher quality education had a positive correlation. Overall though, the results of increased competition were modest. In a meta-analysis of nine separate studies on the effects of public school choice on achievement, Miron, Evergreen, and Urschel (2008) concluded four studies showed an increase on achievement, three were mixed, and two had a negative effect on achievement. Competition then, as a free market concept, has shown to both increase and decrease student achievement.

Charter Schools as a School Choice Option

When examining the data on public charter schools, the data in Indiana revealed that charter school students generally outpace traditional public school students. The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) studies from Stanford in 2011 regarding Indiana charter schools stated that 98% of charter schools have similar or better achievement growth than

regular public schools in reading and 100% of Indiana charter schools demonstrated similar or better achievement growth in mathematics. However, this similar or better rate of growth was only evident in the first two years of attendance at a charter school. After that, the rate of growth showed no significant differences (www.credo.stanford.edu, 2011).

Researchers found there is evidence that school choice has led to increases in academic achievement among minorities. The CREDO studies of 2011 for Indiana charter schools found Black students in these schools produced significantly higher gains on reading comprehension and mathematics scores than the Black students in traditional public schools. However, Hispanic students did not show any significant gains from the charter schools when compared to Hispanics in traditional public schools (www.credo.stanford.edu, 2011).

More recent research through a meta-analysis by Betts and Tang (2016) shows that charter schools have higher mathematics achievement as compared to traditional public schools. Though this overall pattern exists, there is variation in achievement based on the quality of the educational programs between the traditional schools and charter schools. Reading did not show any significant achievement gains (Betts & Tang, 2016).

Politics and Policy of School Choice

School Choice Policy In the Courts

This section will discuss the court decisions that have strengthened the justification for school choice in America. These court decisions, in turn, have allowed for states to change policy that is more favorable of school choice. It will also discuss the political movements that have caused the surge of school choice in the United States over the last 30 years. Finally, it will discuss advocacy groups that seek to promote school choice as an option for students and parents.

The first major U.S. Supreme Court case related to choice created the ability of the federal government to protect the educational rights and freedoms of the individual and the parents. The U. S. Supreme Court case of *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923) struck down the state law that made it illegal to teach classes in any language other than English. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the law that blocked sectarian schools from teaching in native languages to large numbers of minority students (Viteritti, 1998). Again, parents were given more rights and choices that allowed their children to be educated according to their preferences. “Together the *Pierce* and *Meyer* decisions would serve to establish the fundamental right of parents to have their children educated in schools that reflected their own values, and the commensurate right of parochial schools to exist as viable alternatives for parents” (Viteritti, 1998, p. 10).

The second U.S. Supreme Court case decision in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925), struck down a state law which forced Oregon school children to attend only public schools and thereby making private schools illegal, set a legal standard that parents had the right to educate a child according to their own preferences. This was a case against the historically Protestant influenced schools, which were also endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan. This was the first Supreme Court case that began to see education as an individual right rather than a governmental right. The education of the child was not necessarily a function of the state, rather it was a family’s right to guide the education of the child and especially if that meant upholding core family values (Kafer, 2007). School instruction could now be based on what parents believed was in the best interest of their child and parents could control for the curriculum.

A landmark 2002 U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding Cleveland voucher programs declared that school vouchers were constitutional and did not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. This decision made it possible for states to provide tax dollars to fund

private education if parents chose to send their child to a private school. States, however, could pass legislation limiting the use of vouchers, but the practice did not violate the First Amendment and the separation of church and state. This solidified the option for parents to not only utilize school choice, but to get tuition support through vouchers (Viteritti, Wahlberg, & Wolf, 2005). School vouchers is one small component of the overall school choice movement in America, but it continues to increase as state legislatures pass new policies related to school choice. The year 2005 was a very active in school choice as Pennsylvania and Arizona also passed voucher laws (Brown, 2006). Since then additional states have added policies that allow state support for school choice. At the time of this dissertation, 47 states have open enrollment policies, 14 states plus Washington, D. C. have voucher programs, and 44 states have charter school laws (Education Commission of the United States, 2018).

National Politics of School Choice

The politics of school choice can be traced at the national level back to President Ronald Reagan and President G. H. W. Bush. Both advocated for school choice as viable option for parents. Both presidents supported the ideas of Friedman and the free market system as it applied to education (Viteritti et al., 2005). Milton Friedman's (1962) concept of free choice is often seen as a backbone in Republican politics. This concept had major political backing from the Republican Party on a national level. By 1992, President Bush gave scholarships to the children of poor and middle income military families to send their children to public, private, and religious schools. The 1996 Republican nominee for President, Bob Dole, proposed spending \$2.5 billion to fund vouchers for low-income students to attend private schools (Viteritti et al., 2005). The push for vouchers and offering parents a financial incentive was now a common theme at the national level.

During this time, the Democratic Party was seen as the opposing voice on school choice. President Bill Clinton had championed bills for school choice in Arkansas as Governor. However, as President, he vetoed a bill that passed the Republican controlled legislature which gave voucher money to 2,000 poor and minority children in Washington, D. C. (Viteritti et al., 2005). Currently, trends indicate that both major political parties endorse school choice in America. Finally, parents and teachers like the concept of school choice because their students have access to high performing schools and better programs (Smith, 1995). Both major political parties have endorsed some kind of school choice options. For example, Annette Williams was a key Democrat in the fight for choice in Wisconsin as a method to increase educational equality (Smith, 1995). The Cleveland school voucher movement was highly supported by several Democrat council members (Smith, 1995). The fight for school choice now centers on efforts of nationwide reformers who see choice as a way to improve schooling for all children.

In 2007, the Center for Policy Analysis at the University of Connecticut conducted a symposium bringing in scholars from law, economics, sociology, education, and public policy to discuss school choice and the policies associated with choice (Cobb, Bifulco, & Bell, 2009). The group investigated school choice policies nationwide, legal constraints against choice policy, teaching methods, and educational achievement of students related to choice. The symposium released a series of research articles related to school choice and the results were published in the *Peabody Journal of School Choice*. The body of work related to the pro-school choice movement continues to grow and universities are often in support of the research. Much of the work of the symposium intended to decrease bureaucratic restraints on schools, increase the effects of the free market system on schooling, and increase the innovation of education, which they postulated would improve student achievement (Cobb, Bifulco, & Bell, 2009).

Wong and Langevin (2007) examined the expansion of school choice policy across the United States over the past 30 years. They concluded that school choice policy initiatives often followed legislation that also focused on economic policies, lottery policies, and morality laws. These concepts often became legislative agendas in neighboring states that sought to compare strengths and weaknesses of policies. Within four years of Minnesota passing charter school choice laws, 20% of states had adopted similar policies aimed at giving parents additional choices. Charter school bills in the remaining states after that all came from neighboring states where school choice bills had already been passed (Wong & Langevin, 2007). The wave of school choice quickly spread across the country and parents were not only given choice options for their children, many states provided financial support.

Growing Support for School Choice

There are a growing number of national advocacy groups which seek to increase parental choice and attempt to influence legislation related to expanding school choice. *Students First PA* (Pennsylvania) is a group that seeks to create forums for parents to discuss school choice, hold meetings, hold rallies, and give testimony on school choice issues. Other groups such as *Black Alliance for Educational Reform*, *Democrats for Education Reform*, *National School Choice Week*, and *Charter School Capital* are national organizations that seek to influence policy makers for the expansion of school choice options for parents (The Center for Education Reform, 2014).

The United States Department of Education has even developed a grant program for school districts to create and promote public school choice. The grants allow schools to create inter-district and intra-district choice options for parents in low-performing public schools. The funds can be used for transportation, administrative costs (up to 5%), programming, transfer

tuition, and for increasing capacity in high enrollment programs. The *Voluntary Public School Choice* program allows state departments of education to improve, increase, and enhance educational opportunities for public school choice (United States Department of Education, 2014).

Effective School Choice Policy

In order to address many of the concerns previously discussed, it is important to explain the components of effective school choice policies. School districts, particularly large metropolitan districts, centralized their policies rather than leave those policies up to individual schools. This centralization provides consistency and fairness for all students in that district. Also, districts considered transportation options for all students, not just those who can afford it. In addition, funding should be monitored in order to prevent financial stratification among the schools. The purpose of those policies would be to prevent any further stratification by race, ethnicity, or income (Howe et al., 2002). Cobb and Glass (2009) discussed the issue of students from both high and low socioeconomic statuses and how school choice policies often ignore the disadvantaged students. Policies should focus on the students from lower socioeconomic status, minority students, and those from isolated neighborhoods. It is socially unjust to further isolate these students from the advantaged students (Cobb & Glass, 2009).

The stratification of race is a serious concern for school districts. Stratification issues are discussed further in detail later in this review. If the policies related to school choice address these specific issues, segregation issues can be avoided. It is important to understand that human capital increases as people of different backgrounds, races, and ethnicities share experiences with each other. The public schools are the optimal place to allow the opportunities to exchange cultural ideas. The choice policies need to be able to evenly and effectively distribute students

with a variety of backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and cultures to enrich the educational experience for all (Cobb & Glass, 2009). Policies that do not address race are only allowing the further segregation of schools (Holme et al., 2013). Places such as El Rio, California and San Antonio, Texas did not have diversity goals and therefore had issues relating to further segregation in the schools when parents utilized school choice (Holme et al., 2013; Prins, 2007). By creating better policies and better programming, schools may attract a diverse range of students while creating equal educational environments.

School Choice Policy in Indiana

A central focus of this dissertation is to conduct the research within the state of Indiana. Recent changes in legislation and the implementation of choice policy in Indiana makes it an ideal setting for research on open enrollment. Since 2008, Indiana greatly increased the growth of school choice options for parents. The choice movement intended to shift the power from the schools to the parents. In Indiana, numerous laws have been passed, the strength and number of advocacy groups has increased, and the number of students participating in school choice has increased.

In Indiana, open enrollment is one form of a school choice option for parents and it allows students to transfer from one public school to another. Indiana had two phases of school choice over the past few years. The first steps came back in 2008 when Governor Daniels signed into legislation Public Law 146 changing how schools were funded from local property taxes to the state's general tax revenues. The Foundation Grant, the primary tuition funding for students, shifted from local property tax revenues to be funded by the state and thus eliminated the need for transfer tuition fees. Previously, schools had charged transferring-in students up to several thousand dollars. Once Public Law 146 of 2008 was passed, schools drastically dropped the

amount of transfer tuition charged. Within a year that rate was dropped to zero dollars for a student to transfer. Although this law did not specifically state that it was an open enrollment policy, it paved the way for school choice because there was now zero cost to families wishing to transfer (Herrmann et al., 2009).

Over the past few years, schools in Indiana have not charged any fees for transfers and school choice has increased drastically. Indianapolis Public schools had a net loss of 20,000 students for the 2017-2018 school year (Fall 2017-2018 Public Corporation Transfer Report, 2018). Nearly 10% of the students located in northeast Indiana do not attend their local school district (Kurtz, 2018). In Indiana, 99,840 students, just under 10% of the statewide student population, attend school out of the local public school boundary where they live (Fall 2017-2018 Public Corporation Transfer Report, 2018). As students and parents utilized school choice, some schools experienced large shifts in population. For example, Concord Community Schools in Elkhart County added almost 400 students over the past two years (Crothers, 2014). The increase was viewed as positive, but Superintendent Wayne Stubbs cautioned that with the large increase in students comes with concerns for class sizes, transportation, other programs (Crothers, 2014).

Politics and Vouchers in Indiana

As families begin to explore options for choice, advocacy groups are exploiting the shift in public opinion. A July 2014 nationwide poll by the *Friedman Foundation* showed that many parents were feeling as though there was a significant gap in the public's desire for school choice options and the reality of available options. Only 1/3 of respondents indicated that they believed public school was the best option for students (Center for Education Reform, 2014). Because of this lack of support for public schooling, states such as Indiana have new advocacy groups that

seek to promote the idea of school choice as a tool for improving education in the state. A parent advocate group, *School Choice Indiana*, has become the national model for how a political action group should act and think when it comes to influencing legislation (Center for Education Reform, 2014). In their 2014 poll, *School Choice Indiana* conducted a survey that concluded, “Among the findings in a report presented today to the Indiana State Board of Education, 41% of Indiana respondents would prefer a private school choice program or the ability to transfer their child to another public school if enrolled in a public school on academic probation. 53% of respondents would prefer additional resources for their school” (Center for Education Reform, 2014, para. 11). Other states are watching Indiana as the state implements new choice policies.

In addition to open enrollment, Indiana has a private choice option that does allow for voucher payments based on household income (Indiana Department of Education Office of School Finance, 2014). In Indiana, if the General Assembly continues to allocate additional funds, more students may take advantage of school vouchers which in turn draws students and funding away from public schools. Over the past several years, the number of students in Indiana leaving public schools and utilizing vouchers has increased from just under 4,000 students in 2011 to almost 20,000 students in 2014 (Indiana Department of Education Department of School Finance, 2014).

Former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels signed the broadest school voucher bill in United States called, “choice scholarships” (Butcher, 2013). This bill was the most inclusive bill in America by expanding school choice to low-income and middle-income families. Scholarships are based on a sliding scale according to parental income. The intent was to give parents additional choices so that they did not have to send their child to the local public school. At the time of this writing, Indiana allowed vouchers for three school years and has allocated

over \$134 million for this program (Indiana Department of Education Office of School Finance, 2014). While that is \$134 million earmarked for education, those funds are not going to traditional public schools in Indiana; instead, that money was transferred to private schools. The money allocated for education is set by the General Assembly and a higher percentage of that funding is shifting away from public schools each year. The number of public schools stays the same every year and these districts now have less money to operate the Education Fund.

Sending and Receiving Students

In Indiana, professional education organizations have failed to adequately address the change in policy regarding open enrollment. Two professional organizations in Indiana briefly discuss school choice policies on their websites. The *Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents* (IAPSS) issued a position statement back in 2008 regarding the ethics that public school superintendents would display regarding the transfer of students across district lines as part of the open enrollment school choice policy in Indiana. Basically, it is a set of guidelines that relate to students who are expelled or could drastically change the receiving school in a negative way (www.iapss-in.org, 2014). At the time of this writing, the IAPSS has not updated their position now that open enrollment continues to increase and is having financial implications on districts in Indiana. The *Indiana School Board Association* (ISBA) has a list of recommended policies that schools should have approved by the local school board and Transfer Tuition/Cash Transfer is one of them (www.isba-ind.org, 2014). There is no specific policy language available from the site for a recommended policy regarding open enrollment.

Although open enrollment has been accepted in theory, the practice of open enrollment by districts was very selective at first and not all families were treated equally. An early issue with open enrollment in Indiana gave principals the discretion to only allow students they

deemed to be acceptable. Students with low grades or behavior issues were not always allowed to enter a district through open enrollment. Schools would only allow the best and brightest students to transfer into a district. Essentially, this eliminated the ability of all parents to have equal opportunities for school choice.

In 2012, the state legislature passed a bill that prevented schools from only allowing the most desirable students into a district while denying the low performing or discipline problem students. Only students with suspensions more than 10 days, students with poor attendance, or students with a history of drugs and violence could be denied a transfer (Indiana Code 20-26-11-32). All other students had to be accepted, including special education students and students with low test scores and low grades. Administrators had to allow all eligible students to be able to transfer into a building, not just the students that had good grades or who had minimal discipline problems.

The aggressive choice policies adopted by Indiana created an atmosphere for open enrollment and vouchers. Public school districts will continue to address the effects of shifting funds and shifting students over the next couple of decades. These districts will be changed financially and will make adjustments in staffing and programming based on the number of pupils in the district.

Marketing Strategy

As districts grapple with the free market concept, part of the school model today involves marketing the local district. In order to attract and retain students, schools work towards creating positive public images whether it be test scores, programs, or extracurricular opportunities (Jabbar, 2015; 2016). Because school choice involves students and money flowing out of districts, Zimmerly (personal communication, July 31, 2014) suggested schools have to change

their philosophy to attract more students. Schools today in Indiana are embracing the free market concept and are actively recruiting students. For example, Elkhart Community Schools sent pamphlets to all the homes in neighboring districts. Plymouth Community Schools and Goshen Community Schools have television commercials. Middlebury Community Schools purchased newspaper advertisements for their district. Ultimately, the goal is to attract and retain students.

Demographic Shifts Caused By School Choice

Issues from School Choice

Researchers concluded that other factors such as school-wide achievement and sociodemographic make-up are greatly affected by school choice. For example, some schools have been able to achieve at high rates while other schools have suffered because of the loss of students (Howe, Eisenhart, & Betebenner, 2002). Minority rates have shifted in schools. These rates have dramatically shifted between buildings and districts in certain parts of the country. As discussed later in the chapter, there is evidence showing that school choice has increased school segregation (Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Cobb & Glass, 2009; Holme & Richards, 2009; Howe et al., 2002; Prins, 2007; Rubenstein et al., 1992). Finally, some school districts have seen the revolving door concept where they have equal numbers of students transferring in and out of districts and they do not have to compete for students (Powers, Topper, & Silver, 2012).

Increased Stratification

As stated earlier, school choice refers to students having the right to choose whichever school they want, for whichever reason they want. However, the research suggests that not all students utilize school choice options. Choice policies often attract elite (higher socioeconomic status) families, which may lead to increased stratification in the schools (Holme, Frankenberg,

Diem, & Welton, 2013). Witte and Thorn (1996) found that in Milwaukee, Asian and White females who were high achievers from highly educated and higher socioeconomic status were more likely to use school choice. Yet, the intent was for all students to have a choice in their school. Not everyone used school choice as an option and made school conditions worse for some students.

School choice has been shown to increase stratification in achievement, race, income, and equity (Bell, 2009; Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Cobb & Glass, 2009; Holme & Richards, 2009). This unequal effect on students does not fit with the idea of having equal access to education for all students. As stated by Smith (1995), "...True societal integration and equal opportunity is the most pressing need of our multicultural, pluralistic society" (p. 193). If school choice leads to stratification, these districts risk not being part of that integrated, pluralistic society.

Recent Shifts in Minority/Majority Populations

The United States is experiencing new trends in the resegregation of schools due to shifts in demographics. Demographic populations in the south and the west show that Whites are no longer the majority, rather Blacks, Latinos, and Whites are all minorities (Epperly, 2014). The suburban areas of large metropolitan cities have become Black and/or Latino and now have fewer Whites enrolling in those schools (Epperly, 2014). This population shift is leading to segregation by default. Critics of school choice argue that only motivated parents will choose to send their child to new schools, which then only segregates schools more by race and class (Chingos, 2013). Currently, California has the largest number of segregated Latino students in the United States (Epperly, 2014). The changing demographics of neighborhoods and schools

have caused some parents to investigate school choice options. This shift, too, can influence how parents utilize school choice within their respective states.

The shift of demographics has led to the resegregation of schools in the south and along Mexican border states. Experts are continually studying population shifts and the effect on education. Orfield (1999) believes children receive a better education in successful multicultural schools. It is important know why parents are utilizing school choice and whether or not race is a factor. Not only are population shifts causing the resegregation of school, but some areas of the country are seeing school choice as a cause of resegregation (Orfield, 2009). A RAND study found that students utilizing school choice typically only transferred to schools with similar race percentages (Zimmer, Booker, Gill, Lavertu, Sass, & Witte, 2009). This is often true in urban areas where many charter schools exist. Minority parents are sending their children to charter schools that are primarily comprised of minority races. This is creating the resegregation of urban schools in the name of progressive school choice (Orfield, 2009; Zimmer, Booker, Gill, Lavertu, Sass, & Witte, 2009).

Some states have experienced increased racial segregation based on school choice policies. In Boulder, Colorado, schools experienced high numbers of White students leaving schools that had higher percentages of minority groups when they first started the city school choice program (Howe et al., 2002). In California, Prins (2007) found that White students transferred out of schools that had high percentages of Latino students and went to schools that were mostly White. These schools that the Whites transferred out of had higher rates of low socioeconomic status students and high numbers of English Language Learners. Many of the parents chose to utilize school choice and leave the high percentage Latino schools. From 1970 - 2004, White student enrollment dropped from 69% to 11% as parents transferred to other schools

within the district (Prins, 2007). Prins (2007) found that White students fled rural Ashe Elementary in California with high rates of Latino students at high rates because of transfer policies and it in fact segregated the school. The policies did not account for minority/majority percentages.

Through choice, parents unknowingly increased stratification within that school. The problem is that “segregated schooling powerfully structures the life chances of Latino/a students...” (Prins, 2007, p. 304). The school district did not have a policy that prohibited ‘White flight’ in the district. Residents of the district indicated that they believed the Latino students did not transfer because the parents of those students did not care about the quality of education their child received. That was not true. The Latino parents cared, but lacked the resources (time, money, transportation) to take advantage of the school choice option (Prins, 2007).

Orfield and Yun found that Latino students are significantly more segregated than Black students despite a 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision recognizing the right to be desegregated (Orfield & Yun, 1999). In Omaha, Nebraska, the city had to enforce a 7-3 White/Black rule. For every 7 white students that transferred out, the school could only allow 3 African-American students to also transfer out. In order to maintain racial balance at some of the schools in the district, they had policies that would not allow any African-American students to transfer out of one high school, while at another high school only Black students were allowed to transfer out. All of this was in an effort to avoid stratification by the Omaha schools. However, in 1993, a hearing officer ruled that these policies were illegal because school choice was considered more important than desegregation of the schools (Smith, 1995). Other states have seen similar trends where whites are transferring at higher rates.

Finally, at another district in Azalea, California, White students were leaving at an alarming rate because the neighboring district was viewed as being high achieving and all the white, high ability students transferred to it.

Even though there is ample support that shows school choice can segregate schools, there is evidence to suggest that it is not necessarily a rampant concern in every state. Some states have not seen the stratification of race similar to the previously mentioned states. Durham, North Carolina experienced the reverse effect at some grade levels, particularly at the middle school level. Students of minority status and lower socioeconomic status transferred out of their local, mostly White, high socioeconomic districts in favor of schools with higher minority populations similar to their own (Bifulco et al., 2009). Parents of the minority students wanted their children to be in schools with children from similar backgrounds.

Phoenix, Arizona had higher numbers of minority students were African-American, Hispanic, and American Indians transferred at higher rates than Whites. Hispanics constituted 47% of all students utilizing school choice in Phoenix (Powers et al., 2012). Other states had similar experiences, indicating that it was not about Whites being the only group utilizing school choice. Some parents in Boulder, Colorado believed that the case of ‘White flight’ was exaggerated and was not significant in their district (Howe et al., 2002).

Consequences of Choice

Stratification by race is prevalent in many states, however, this is not the only problem with school choice policies. Critics argue that school choice creates unhealthy competition among schools, limits cooperation, and divides neighborhoods (Howe et al., 2002). This creates division among the schools and only further exacerbates the ‘haves and have not’ in society.

Stratification can occur along socioeconomic lines and there is data that indicates it created unequal schools for students.

Choice only works for those families that use it or that are able to utilize it because they have the resources. Even if school choice policies allow others to gain a high quality education, what happens to those left behind is not worth the social stratification on those students (Lee, Croninger, & Smith, 1991). Not all families can afford to utilize school choice because of transportation. It seems as though the students left behind are the ones who need to use school choice, but they are often too poor to do so (Mickelson, Bottia, & Southworth, 2008). This practice makes the advantaged students gain a higher quality education while disadvantaged students continue to be in lower performing schools.

In addition, schools with greater test scores and higher socioeconomic status tend to reject more transfers, often citing capacity issues. These high achieving schools do not want a negative impact on test scores (Reback, 2008). Research suggests that high achieving students get to transfer while the lower performing students are stuck in the low quality schools.

Examining trends in various states indicates that there are tremendous amounts of inequality in education among students who participate in school choice. In Boulder, parent perceptions were that the best schools got the best students due to marketing ploys by each building. This competition in the free market system only served the interests of the schools and limited effort was actually focused on improving education and student achievement (Howe et al., 2002).

Detroit, Michigan and Durham, North Carolina school students, who had active, educated, and economically advantaged parents, were more likely to utilize choice options. These students tend to make a difference in the educational environment and by leaving the local

schools, the local schools seem to suffer academically, suffer in their climate, and only become lower performing over time. Lee et al., (1991) noticed this widened the gap between the rich and the poor students. Carlson, Lavery, and Witte (2011) concluded that schools in Colorado with higher rates of free/reduced lunches had higher percentages of students leave and smaller percentages of students wanting to transfer into the district.

In summary, school administrators created policies and programming which lead to further stratification and less integration in schools. School superintendents and their perceptions of school choice policies and the unintended consequences of those policies are essential to the effective management of the district. The intention is to help all students, including students who do and do not use choice. There are cases where school choice has hurt schools with lower socioeconomic status and lower performing schools while the higher socioeconomic status and higher performing schools continue to grow and flourish. Essentially, this is the free market in action within public education.

Attracting and Retaining Students

In order to attract students, schools have become marketing experts (Jabbar, 2016). Tenbusch and Garrett (1993) explained that local level administrators understand the free market system and the effect it has on schools. In order to progress, schools market themselves as the best option for parents to choose. Schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Montclair, New Jersey have controlled school choice programs that seek to keep students within the district. Each middle school and high school has developed its own unique programs and students can choose which school they wish to attend. Students are then assigned schools based on choice and racial balance. The programs maintain desegregation, but allow schools to market themselves for parents and student needs while giving some level of choice (Wells, 1990).

A high school in Azalea, California employed a marketing strategy in order to stop from hemorrhaging too many students. They created a high school for high ability students by introducing the International Baccalaureate (IB) program (Holme et al., 2013). This high ability program was designed to get students prepared for college and offered a variety of college credit courses. The school then became the place that students wanted to transfer to because of the IB program. It was a niche market that attracted high performing students.

Some districts have been selective in marketing campaigns. Jabbar (2016) found that some districts were not marketing to disadvantaged students and were not trying to attract students who could hurt the district. This selective process only sought students who were higher performing.

In summary, schools and districts have the ability to market their programs that will attract students to their district or their building. This is the premise of the free market system. Schools can recruit more students to the district as revenues become stagnant or even decline. Schools that are highly sought after create a strong, positive public image where parents want to send their child.

Summary

The research related to school choice for Indiana is limited and superintendent perceptions have not been collected and analyzed. This dissertation seeks to compile those perceptions of open enrollment in Indiana. School choice is prevalent in every state and is a function of the free market system in America. Parents have the option to send their child to whichever school they believe will provide the best educational opportunity. These policies empower parents and increase parental involvement. There are a variety of reasons parents choose to send their child to another school. Parents want to send their child to a better school

that has better programs and better achievement scores. Often times, school choice creates other issues related to stratification and the unequal balance of resources. It is up to the local schools to create programs that attract and retain students within the district. As in most states, when a child transfers, the money follows that child and the home school loses revenue. It is therefore advantageous for schools to create programs and policies that make their schools the most desirable. As parents become more aware of school choice options, superintendents can market their local district in order to meet the needs of families by attracting and maintaining high numbers of students through programming.

School choice is an option for parents to place their child in what they deem is the best learning environment. Parents who are highly involved in their child's education can exercise that right. An increase in school choice options can lead to new and innovative schools, especially schools that can reach low-income and minority populations (Brown, 2006). However, when parents opt for different schools, there are problems that accompany school choice options. Some schools have experienced segregation as White students transfer out of schools with large minority populations. Other schools have experienced a widening in the gap between the rich and the poor as more affluent families choose to send their children to different schools. When the child leaves, the money follows to the new district. This is leaving already low-performing and financially struggling districts in deeper financial strain. An unfortunate part of many low-performing and cash strapped schools is that often times the teachers are not licensed in their areas and are of lower quality (Cohen-Vogel, Feng, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2003). School administrators are aware of practices that limit the effectiveness of school choice policies.

The idea of applying the free market concept to public education is a paradigm shift that school leaders will need to focus on in the future. The effect of school choice on public education in the state of Indiana is an area that needs additional research. When substantial numbers of students transfer across district lines, it has financial implications and superintendents make adjustments to staffing, planning, and programming at their schools.

The next chapter of this study explains the research process in detail used to gather the perceptions Indiana public school superintendents have related to the effects of open enrollment as an option of school choice. It explains the research methods used and the tools used to gather the information for the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to understand how Indiana public school superintendents perceive the effects of open enrollment. Since 2008, Public Law 146, the bill that made possible open enrollment in Indiana, allowed students to transfer across district lines without families paying transfer tuition (Herrmann et al., 2009). The bill shifted the funding of public schools from local property taxes to state collected sales taxes. At that point, parents no longer needed to pay tuition for being out of district. Open enrollment became a school choice option for parents to have their child educated at a public school they believe best meets the needs of that child. This dissertation examined superintendent perceptions of that law on school finance, district programming, staffing, climate, marketing, and demographics. Three research questions guide this study:

1. How do Indiana superintendents perceive the effects of open enrollment in relation to: finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts?

2. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts related to district contexts?
3. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, climate, program quality, staffing, marketing, and demographic changes related to their disposition of wanting to attract students?

This research methods chapter is organized to describe the quantitative study. This chapter describes the research design, description of the sample, the instruments used, data collection, data analysis, and limitations of the study. Through this analysis, I organized and summarized superintendent perceptions, related to open enrollment in Indiana, as described below.

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative approach to collect data and information related to superintendents' perceptions. In this study, superintendents were given an opportunity to express their opinions of open enrollment by answering a survey with Likert scale questions. This study was designed to collect data about the perceptions of superintendents and how they have managed fluctuations in students and finances because of the open enrollment policy. Areas of focus for the survey include: district finances, programming, changes in demographics, staffing, climate, and marketing. The information was disaggregated according to district demographics such as district size, district letter grade, free and reduced lunch rates, minority rates, tuition support, enrollment, and enrollment changes. Finally, an open-ended response allowed for any additional thoughts that superintendents may have in addition to those questions asked in the survey.

Description of the Survey Process

For the survey, superintendent perceptions were based on the number of in-to-district and out-of-district transfer students in their district during a three year period from 2015-2016 school year to the 2017-2018 school year data. The superintendents were asked to think about the influence of open enrollment policies on their current district across three academic years. The survey results were completely anonymous.

The survey went to all 290 public school superintendents in the State of Indiana. The Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, sent an email and link to all public school superintendents. The survey period lasted three weeks from August 22, 2018-September 12, 2018. The first email was sent on August 22, 2018. A follow-up reminder email was sent on September 4, 2018 to the Executive Director asking that a reminder email be sent to association membership. The survey instrument was developed using Qualtrics at Ball State University. All data were collected and stored using Qualtrics.

Development of the Instrument

The primary instrument to collect data was a survey administered using Qualtrics through Ball State University. The survey utilized a Likert scale. The survey questions have been discussed, reviewed, and vetted by my doctoral chair, Dr. Serena Salloum. In addition, the doctoral committee for this dissertation reviewed the survey. Committee members were Dr. Kendra Lowery, Dr. Lori Boyland, and Dr. James Connolly.

Data Collection

The collection of took place in August and September of 2018. The survey lasted 3 weeks. The data for the quantitative portion was collected after an email was sent to all 290 public school superintendents in Indiana. An initial email and one follow-up email were sent in the second week as a reminder to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

The two main analytical techniques used for the data manipulation were descriptive and inferential statistics. After the data were collected, a series of six constructs were developed for use with the data analysis. These constructs were: finance, staffing, programming, marketing, climate, and demographic changes. These constructs were used for factor analysis of the results. The construct means were then analyzed using bivariate analysis with the demographic variables of district letter grade, minority percentage increase, free/reduced lunch percentage, change of enrollment, state tuition support, and superintendent disposition of wanting to attract new students.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics were analyzed utilizing frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, median, and mode.

The data for the study was examined in light of district context. District letter grade, enrollment, enrollment changes, free and reduced lunch rates, minority rates, and tuition support were used to disaggregate the data related to superintendents' perceptions. Superintendents' perceptions were collected according to their thoughts and actions on district finances, staffing, climate, demographic changes, programming, and marketing strategies.

Inferential Analysis

The inferential tests used were ANOVA and Pearson r tests. These are important for inferential tests to find the significance of relationships among the results for the participants based on demographics. See the Table 2 below.

An analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was used to compare the results of multiple groups with each variable (survey item). These were used to compare the means of each group

within the demographics (Coladarci, Cobb, Minium, & Clarke, 2011). This analysis compared one dependent variable with another independent variable (Gay, Mills, & Airaisin, 2009).

The use of the Pearson r for demographic characteristics defines the variance in perceptions of the influence on school districts. The Pearson r was utilized to measure correlation when both measures are continuous (i.e., ratio or interval) (Gay et al., 2009).

The correlation provides a measure of the relationship between two variables. Any correlation close to 1 indicates a strong relationship, whereas anything close to .2-.3 is considered weak (Nardi, 2005). This test also measures the relationship significance (Coladarci et al., 2011).

Table 3.1

Bivariate Relationship Table

	Finance (Continuous)	Staffing (Continuous)	School Climate (Continuous)	Marketing (Continuous)	Programming (Continuous)	Demographic Change (Continuous)
Letter Grade (discrete)	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA
% Minority (continuous)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)
% FRL (continuous)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)
Change in enrollment (continuous)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)
State Tuition Support (continuous)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)	correlation (Pearson R)
Superintendent Disposition on Enrollment (discrete)	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. Since the survey asks to think about a three year period, superintendents who have been in a district for less than three years may have had limited knowledge of the district. A second limitation is that this survey may be challenging for superintendents who do not have data readily available for the demographic portion of the survey. A third limitation is that not all superintendents in Indiana completed the survey. Finally, superintendents may not be able to have an unbiased opinion of open enrollment due to their own experiences within their district. This is an exploratory study, but is designed to give valuable feedback on superintendents' perceptions related to open enrollment.

Summary

In summary, the study analyzed the perceptions of superintendents on the influence of the open enrollment policies in Indiana. The research collected data from as many superintendents as possible in the state of Indiana. A descriptive and inferential analysis of the results was conducted. The results of the analysis were analyzed using tables and graphs and results were summarized. Inferences and recommendations were drawn from the data. The data provided information that districts can use to minimize the influence of open enrollment. This research study provides a base analysis of the ways in which public schools have attempted to deal with the open enrollment policies where significant numbers of students have transferred across district lines.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter examines the data collected to respond to my research questions:

1. How do Indiana superintendents perceive the effects of open enrollment in relation to: finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts?
2. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts related to district contexts?
3. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, climate, program quality, staffing, marketing, and demographic changes related to their disposition of wanting to attract students?

The purpose of the study was to collect superintendent perceptions of open enrollment on Indiana public school districts. The survey collected the demographics of each district's letter grade, percent minority students, percent of students receiving free/reduced lunch, student enrollment, state tuition support, and superintendent support of open enrollment. The demographic means were then compared to the constructs of finance, staffing, climate, programming, marketing, and change of demographics. This chapter discussed the descriptive and inferential statistics for the variables of interest.

The descriptive statistics were analyzed utilizing frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations. The inferential statistics were analyzed using ANOVA and Pearson *r* tests. An analysis of variance test (ANOVA) compared the results of multiple groups with each variable (survey items). ANOVA compared the means of each group within the demographics (Coladarci, Cobb, Minium, & Clarke, 2011). This analysis compared one dependent variable with another independent variable (Gay, Mills, & Airaisin, 2009). The results were analyzed for significance.

The conclusions drawn from the data analysis are discussed in Chapter 5.

Descriptives

The survey was sent to all 290 public school superintendents in Indiana. A total of 156 superintendents logged into the survey, making an initial participation rate of 53.7%, however, not all superintendents responded to all of the questions. The number of respondents to each question varied from 104-116 in the survey; therefore, the actual participation rate was between 35.9% and 40%.

Table 4.1

Individual Demographic Descriptives

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Years as a superintendent	0	43	8.77	6.59	111
Years at current district	0	43	5.92	5.5	109
Superintendent Disp on open enrollment	1	5	4.32	1.286	111

In Table 4.1, the average respondent to this survey was a superintendent for less than 9 years. The average time at the current district of employment is less than six years. Nationally, the average tenure for superintendents at a district is 5.81 years (Superville, 2018). This puts the average respondent for this study close to the national average. The question of superintendents disposition on wanting to attract students showed an overwhelming majority of 84% ($n = 95$) agree that they want more students at their district. Superintendents perceived the benefits of attracting new students outweigh the negatives of attracting new students.

Table 4.2

District Descriptives

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Number of Students	300	15000	2923.62	3345.88	116
Free/Reduced Lunch	14	86	46.07	15.13	114
Percent Minority	0	100	14.1	19.81	112
Transfers In	0	1052	164.45	182.67	110
Transfers Out	0	2816	155.9	326.58	107
Total State Tuition	4286	7815	5906.92	548.93	113

By examining the district means in Table 4.2, a clear picture of the average responding superintendent can be summarized as from a district of about 2300 students with 46% free/reduced lunch, with 14% minority enrollment, has a net gain of about 9 students per year, and receives about \$5900 per year from the state in tuition support. For the Fiscal Year 2017, the average funding per pupil using the Basic Grant and Complexity formula had an average tuition payment to schools of \$5935 (Indiana Department of Education, May 2017). In 2017, the number of minority students in Indiana was 31% of the student population (Indiana State Board of Education, 2017). The average respondent in this dissertation approximately represents the average superintendent in the state of Indiana based current district demographic data.

Table 4.3

District Letter Grades

District Letter Grade		
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>n</u>
A	19.83%	23
B	56.03%	65
C	22.41%	26
D	0.86%	1
F	0.86%	1
Average/Total	46%	116

In Table 4.3, a majority of respondents came from districts with either an A or B letter grade. The results were 75.86% ($n=88$) of superintendents served districts that earned the top two letter grades. Only two respondents reported from a D or F school. There were only four school districts in Indiana that earned a D or F rating by the Indiana Department of Education in 2018 (Indiana Department of Education, 2019). Overall, this sample approximately represents the state of Indiana and current district demographics.

Developing Constructs

The data for this dissertation were analyzed using the constructs of finance, staffing, climate, programming, marketing, and demographic changes. There were several questions within each construct. The construct means were then analyzed using bivariate analysis with the demographic variables of district letter grade, minority percentage increase, free/reduced lunch percentage, change of enrollment, state tuition support, and superintendent disposition of wanting to attract new students. All data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 in March of 2019.

An exploratory, principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to create the following constructs: finance, staffing, climate, programming, marketing, and demographics change.

Reliability. Reliability is used to measure the consistency with which results are obtained. The constructs of this dissertation were analyzed for internal consistency reliability. Internal consistency is applied to sets of items used to measure a general concept (Litwin, 1995).

There were five questions that were recoded in order to make the scales consistent and to increase the Alpha reliability. Those questions were: our district lost revenue, the district cut staffing and programming, increase in discipline referrals, our district experienced a teacher shortage, and the district has a negative perception. As displayed in Table 4.4 below, all constructs had an alpha reliability of .5 or higher. Two constructs had reliability approaching .7 demonstrating internal consistency. One construct was above .7. Any reliability correlation between two sets of data above .7 is considered good reliability (Litwin, 1995). This is my first effort at a dissertation and the Alpha reliability is acceptable according to my dissertation chair, Dr. Serena Salloum.

Table 4.4**Alpha Reliability for Study Constructs**

	<u>Cronbach's Alpha</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>
Finance	.507	4
Staffing	.689	5
Climate	.768	6
Programming	.698	3
Marketing	.624	6
Demographic Changes	.550	3

Finance

The finance construct measured the financial health and stability of a district. The question stems related to the superintendents' perceptions of the financial support per student. Does the state provide adequate funding or are districts using alternative sources of support such as a referendum? I wanted to learn if superintendents believe their district is financially strong. The change in enrollment over the past three years has not caused districts to reduce staffing levels. This construct relates to the overall district wealth.

When creating the finance construct, two variables were excluded due to low factor loadings. The variables excluded were the seeking alternative revenue sources and the use of local funds for transfer students. The alpha reliability for the finance construct was $\alpha = .507$.

Table 4.5**Finance Stems**

<u>Question Stem</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>n</u>
Lost revenue	25 (22.1%)	19 (16.8%)	9 (7.7%)	25 (22.1%)	35 (31%)	113
Basic Grant is adequate	55 (48.7%)	34 (30%)	12 (10.6%)	11 (9.8%)	1 (.8%)	113
Use of local funds	14 (12.3%)	13 (11.5%)	29 (25.6%)	37 (32.7%)	20 (17.7%)	113
Alternative revenue sources	30 (26.5%)	20 (17.7%)	11 (9.7%)	13 (11.5%)	39 (34.5%)	113
Built new facilities	32 (28.5%)	21 (18.8%)	19 (16.9%)	28 (25%)	12 (10.7%)	112
Cut staffing and programs	23 (20.3%)	21 (18.5%)	10 (8.8%)	26 (23%)	33 (29.2%)	113

Table 4.6 shows a split between school superintendents who gained revenue 38.9% ($n = 44$) and schools that lost revenue at 53.1% ($n = 60$). A large percentage of respondents perceived that the state does not adequately fund school children with a 78.7% ($n = 89$) majority who somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with current school funding approach. Exactly half of the respondents at 50.4% ($n = 67$) agreed that using local funds for out-of-district students is appropriate while 23.8% ($n = 27$) disagreed. There is a nearly even split between districts that are seeking alternative sources of revenue at 46% ($n = 52$) and districts that are not seeking new revenue sources at 44.2% ($n = 50$). Superintendents indicated that they built new facilities to attract new students in 35.7% ($n = 40$) of the responses.

Table 4.6**Finance Descriptives**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Analysis N</u>	<u>Missing n</u>
Lost revenue	2.766	1.584	111	0
Basic grant is adequate	1.830	1.026	111	0
Built new facilities	2.690	1.400	110	1
Cut staffing and programming	2.802	1.542	111	0

In Table 4.6, from the means analysis, it appears that superintendents perceived school funding is not adequate.

Staffing

The staffing construct attempted to gather data relating to districts that were able to maintain current staffing levels and maintain a high quality teaching staff regardless of open enrollment. In addition, I wanted to learn if superintendents were able to hire high quality teachers when they believed there was a need due to increasing enrollment. The alpha reliability for Staffing was $\alpha = .689$.

Table 4.7**Staffing Stems**

<u>Question Stem</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>n</u>
Maintain staffing	16 (14.65%)	21 (19.2%)	7 (6.4%)	39 (35.8%)	26 (23.8%)	109
Increased staffing	30 (27.3%)	22 (20%)	18 (16.4%)	22 (20%)	18 (16.4%)	110
High quality staff	1 (.9%)	13 (11.8%)	14 (12.7%)	42 (38.2%)	40 (36.4%)	110
Teacher shortage	4 (3.6%)	11 (10%)	16 (14.5%)	44 (40%)	35 (31.8%)	110
Hire quality teachers	4 (3.6%)	15 (13.6%)	12 (10.9%)	54 (49.1%)	25 (22.7%)	110

Table 4.7 shows 74.6% ($n = 82$) of respondents agreed they have maintained a high quality teaching staff, despite the fact that 71.8% ($n = 79$) of respondents somewhat agreed and strongly agreed that they have experienced a teacher shortage. The respondents show 71.8% ($n = 79$) somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that they have been able to hire quality teachers. Superintendent responses show that 59.6% ($n = 65$) agreed they have maintained staffing while only 36.4% ($n = 40$) have been able to increase staffing.

Table 4.8

Staffing Descriptives

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Analysis N</u>	<u>Missing n</u>
Maintain staffing	3.370	1.411	107	1
Increase staffing	2.810	1.456	108	0
High quality teachers on staff	3.980	1.032	108	0
Teacher shortage	2.139	1.089	108	0
Hire quality teachers	3.730	1.082	108	0

Climate

The climate construct investigated districts' climate due to changing enrollment. I wanted to learn if the district experienced problems related to new student transfers that would have lowered the overall morale. The construct also captured the superintendents' perceptions of how they think the district is viewed by stakeholders and by neighboring districts. District perceptions, both internally and externally, may have an influence on rates of transfer students. The alpha reliability for Climate was $\alpha = .768$.

Table 4.9**Climate Stems**

<u>Question Stem</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>n</u>
Positive climate	5 (4.6%)	20 (18.5%)	39 (36.1%)	29 (26.8%)	15 (13.9%)	108
Increase in discipline referrals	19 (17.8%)	32 (29.9%)	36 (33.6%)	14 (13.1%)	6 (5.6%)	107
Negative perception	48 (44.4%)	23 (21.3%)	20 (18.5%)	15 (13.9%)	2 (1.9%)	108
Stakeholders belief is positive	2 (1.9%)	3 (2.8%)	7 (6.5%)	46 (42.6%)	50 (46.3%)	108
High job satisfaction	3 (2.8%)	11 (10.2%)	19 (17.6%)	57 (52.3%)	18 (16.7%)	108
Viewed positive by neighbors	3 (2.8%)	10 (9.3%)	12 (11.1%)	41 (38%)	42 (38.9%)	108

In Table 4.9, the superintendents responded with 65.7% ($n = 71$) perceive there is a positive impression of their district. About 88.9% ($n = 96$) somewhat agree or strongly agree that they have the support of their stakeholders. The superintendents perceived their district as viewed favorably by neighboring districts as reported by 76.8% ($n = 83$) of respondents. Almost half of the respondents, specifically 47.7% ($n = 51$) did not perceive an increase in discipline referrals. A large majority of superintendents at 69% ($n = 75$) perceived staff as having a high job satisfaction rate.

Table 4.10**Climate Descriptives**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Analysis N</u>	<u>Missing n</u>
Positive climate	3.270	1.074	106	0
Increased discipline referrals	3.419	1.108	105	1
Negative perception of district	3.924	1.169	106	0
High job satisfaction	3.700	0.968	106	0
Viewed positive by neighbors	4.010	1.065	106	0

Programming

The programming construct was about programs districts specifically added in order to attract students. Some districts have added special education programs, Fine Arts, advanced courses, or sports teams in order to attract students. Some districts have intentionally kept class sizes small as a way to attract additional students. The alpha reliability for Programming was $\alpha = .698$.

Table 4.11

Programming Stems

<u>Question Stem</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>n</u>
Added special education	26 (24.7%)	34 (32.4%)	10 (9.5%)	21 (20%)	14 (13.3%)	105
Maintains high quality programs	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (5.7%)	19 (18%)	80 (76.2%)	105
Added advanced courses	5 (4.8%)	13 (12.5%)	10 (9.6%)	20 (19.2%)	56 (53.8%)	104
High quality fine arts	3 (2.9%)	7 (6.7%)	13 (12.4%)	31 (29.5%)	51 (48.5%)	105
Added sports	16 (15.2%)	25 (23.8%)	18 (17.1%)	28 (26.7%)	18 (17.1%)	105
Small class sizes	3 (2.8%)	14 (13.3%)	16 (15.2%)	33 (31.4%)	38 (36.1%)	104

Table 4.11 shows a large majority of respondents indicated their district maintains high quality programs with 94.2% ($n = 99$) agreement. The data illustrates 73.08% of respondents agreed that they have added advanced courses in order to attract and retain students. The results show 78.09% of respondents believed their district's Fine Arts programs are of high quality and help retain and attract new students.

Table 4.12**Programming Descriptives**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Analysis N</u>	<u>Missing <i>n</i></u>
Added special education programs	2.670	1.396	103	0
Maintains high quality programs	4.700	0.575	103	0
Added advanced courses	4.050	1.262	102	1
High quality fine arts	4.150	1.061	103	0
Added sports	3.060	1.356	103	0
Small class sizes	3.850	1.147	102	1

Table 4.12 indicates that most superintendents agreed they have high quality programs, added advanced courses, and have high quality fine arts programming. Programming is perceived as a way to attract new students.

Marketing

The marketing construct collected data about whether or not districts are actively involved in spending money to attract students from other districts. In the free market concept as applied to education, some schools spent large amounts of money to promote their district in order to increase enrollment. Pulling students from other districts reduced enrollment and ultimately pulled funding from neighboring districts. The alpha reliability for Marketing was $\alpha = .624$.

Table 4.13**Marketing Stems**

<u>Question Stem</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u><i>n</i></u>
Uses advertising	33 (31.1%)	11 (10.3%)	10 (9.4%)	28 (26.4%)	24 (22.6%)	106
Uses marketing firm	61 (57.5%)	12 (11.3%)	10 (9.4%)	17 (16%)	6 (5.6%)	106
Competition is new reality	7 (6.6%)	2 (1.9%)	7 (6.6%)	20 (18.9%)	70 (66%)	106

Table 4.13 shows 49% ($n = 52$) of respondents used advertising as a way to attract new students. Only 21.6% ($n = 23$) of districts reported using an outside marketing firm for advertising. A large majority of respondents perceived that competition is the new reality in education, with 84.9% ($n = 90$) in agreement.

Table 4.14
Marketing Descriptives

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Analysis N</u>	<u>Missing n</u>
Uses advertising	3	1.595	104	0
Uses a marketing firm	2	1.351	104	0
Competition is reality	4.350	1.139	104	0

Table 4.14 indicates that the average superintendent does not use an outside marketing firm to promote the district.

Demographic Changes

The construct of demographic changes was examined to understand changes in the district minority population and socio-economic status. Additionally, the data collected was analyzed to gain a better understanding about district transfer policies and any attempt to track minority percentages. I wanted to learn if superintendents perceived changes to demographics and free/reduced lunch percentages due to student transfers.

This factor excluded the two variables of change in district letter grade and district policy limiting transfers due to low factor loadings. When these were dropped, the Alpha reliability increased. The alpha reliability for Demographic Changes was $\alpha = .550$.

Table 4.15**Change in Demographics Stems**

<u>Question Stem</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>n</u>
Increase in free/reduced	5 (4.6%)	13 (12%)	37 (34.3%)	42 (38.9%)	11 (10.2%)	108
Rise of minority percent	10 (9.3%)	33 (30.6%)	27 (25%)	25 (23.1%)	8 (7.4%)	108
Policy to balance majority/minority	43 (39.8%)	19 (17.5%)	38 (35.2%)	6 (5.6%)	2 (1.9%)	108
Policy limits transfers	36 (33.3%)	16 (14.8%)	9 (8.3%)	21 (19.4%)	25 (23.1%)	107
Letter grade improved	4 (3.7%)	26 (24%)	53 (49%)	15 (13.9%)	10 (9.2%)	108

Table 4.15 for demographic changes shows several points to discuss. The superintendents perceived an increase in free/reduced lunches with 49.1% ($n = 53$) in agreement. There are 57.3% ($n = 62$) districts that do not have open enrollment policies attempting to balance majority and minority populations. The data shows that 49% ($n = 53$) of superintendents reported no change in their district letter grade. Minority populations are not increasing due to open enrollment because 64.9% ($n = 70$) of superintendents either disagreed or were neutral on this question.

Table 4.16**Demographic Changes Descriptives**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Analysis N</u>	<u>Missing n</u>
Increase free/reduced lunch	3.39	0.991	106	0
Rise of minority population	2.82	1.161	106	0
Policy balances majority/minority	2.14	1.064	106	0
Policy limits transfers	2.88	1.615	105	1
District letter grade improved	3.01	0.961	106	0

Correlations and ANOVAs

Table 4.17 is from chapter 3 and shows the initial data analysis plan. It should be used as a preview for data analysis that follows in this chapter.

Table 4.17

Bivariate Relationship Table

	Finance	Staffing	Climate	Marketing	Programming	Demographic Changes
Letter Grade (discrete)	ANOVA p= .030 F= 2.801	ANOVA p= .097 F= 2.019	ANOVA p= .019 F= 3.104	ANOVA p= .804 F= .405	ANOVA p= .882 F= .292	ANOVA p= .349 F= 1.125
% Minority (continuous)	correlation r= .027 p= .782	correlation r= .137 p= .163	correlation r= -.090 p= .366	correlation r= .014 p= .891	correlation r= -.158 p= .118	correlation r= -.031 p= .754
% FRL (continuous)	correlation r= -.222 p= .02	correlation r= -.310 p=.001	correlation r= -.357 p= 0	correlation r= .112 p= .26	correlation r= -.140 p= .160	correlation r= .009 p= .928
Change in enrollment (continuous)	correlation In District r= .182 p= .063 Out of District r= -.073 p= .46	correlation In District r= .380 p= 0 Out of District r= .170 p= .088	correlation In District r= .341 p= 0 Out of District r= .112 p= .269	correlation In District r= .022 p= .828 Out of District r= -.078 p= .444	correlation In District r= .033 p= .745 Out of District r= -.254 p= .013	correlation In District r= .080 p= .425 Out of District r= -.105 p= .297
State Tuition Support (continuous)	correlation r= -.143 p= .137	correlation r= -.221 p= .022	correlation r= -.279 p= .004	correlation r= .136 p= .168	correlation r= .022 p= .824	correlation r= .054 p= .583
Superintendent Disposition on Enrollment (Attract new students) (discrete)	ANOVA p= .363 F= 1.095	ANOVA p= .550 F= .766	ANOVA p= .962 F= .151	ANOVA p= .772 F= .450	ANOVA p= .576 F= .727	ANOVA p= .211 F= 1.49

Correlation Analysis

Table 4.18

Correlations of Constructs

	<u>Finance</u>	<u>Staffing</u>	<u>Climate</u>	<u>Programming</u>	<u>Marketing</u>	<u>Diversity</u>
Finance	-					
Staffing	.507**	-				
Climate	.230*	.561**	-			
Programming	.246*	0.156	0.117	-		
Marketing	-0.051	-0.131	-0.099	.202*	-	
Demographic Changes	0.014	-0.094	-0.01	.280**	0.125	-

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In Table 4.18, a correlation analysis of the six constructs was conducted to understand if the constructs were related. Table 4.18 illustrates several positive, significant correlations. Finance when compared with staffing shows a moderate positive correlation ($r=.507$, $p\leq.01$). Superintendents perceived districts that are more financially advantaged tend to maintain a higher quality teaching staff and are able to keep current levels of staffing or have increased staffing. Staffing and Climate share a moderate, significant relationship ($r=.561$, $p\leq.01$). Superintendents perceived districts that are able to maintain a high quality staff also maintain high levels of morale and community support.

The correlation results show positive but significantly weak relationships exist in the following analyses. Finance when compared with climate ($r=.230$, $p\leq.05$) and programming ($r=.246$, $p\leq.05$). Superintendents perceived districts that are financially advantaged have more positive school climate and are able to offer better programs through Fine Arts or advanced

courses. Marketing compared with programming ($r=.202$, $r\leq.05$) shows a weak, positive correlation as superintendents perceived they are able to advertise better programs as a way to recruit students. Finally, Demographic Changes compared to Programming shows a weak positive relationship ($r=.280$, $p\leq.01$). District that valued free/reduced lunch populations and minority/majority enrollment also offer strong academic programming according to superintendent perceptions.

Table 4.19

Constructs with Demographics

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
Finance	.196*	0.051	-0.008	-.222*	0.027	0.182	-	-0.143
Staffing	0.121	0.089	.370**	-	0.137	.380**	0.073	-.221*
Climate	-	0.05	.194*	-	-0.09	.341**	0.112	-
Programming	0.036	0.151	-.240*	-0.14	-	0.033	-	.279**
Marketing	0.022	-	-0.105	0.112	0.158	0.022	.254*	0.136
Demographic Changes	0.009	0.038	-0.068	0.009	-	0.08	0.078	0.054
					0.031		0.105	

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

- 1- Years as superintendent in district
- 2- Years as superintendent
- 3- Enrollment
- 4- Increase free/reduced lunch percentage
- 5- Rise of minority student percentage
- 6- Transfers into the district
- 7- Transfers out of the district
- 8- Total tuition from the state

In Table 4.19, the correlation of the six constructs with the demographics reveals five moderately significant relationships. Staffing compared with enrollment shows a moderate positive relationship ($r= .370$, $p\leq.01$). Superintendents perceived that districts maintaining a high

quality staffing also have increasing enrollment. Staffing compared to changes in free/reduced lunch percentages saw a moderate negative relationship ($r = -.310, p \leq .01$). Superintendents perceived districts that maintain a high quality staff saw a decline in their percentages of free/reduced lunch percentages due to open enrollment. Staffing when compared with transfers into the district show a moderate positive relationship ($r = .380, p \leq .01$). Superintendents who believed they have a high quality teaching staff also experienced higher rates of students transferring into the district. District climate when compared to free/reduced lunches show a moderate negative relationship ($r = -.357, p \leq .01$). Superintendents who perceived their district as having a positive climate experienced a reduction in free/reduced lunch percentages. Finally, climate compared with transfers in to the district experienced a moderate positive relationship ($r = .341, p \leq .01$). Superintendents who perceived their district as having a positive climate also saw higher numbers of students transferring into the district.

One-Way ANOVA

Table 4.20 District Letter Grade and Constructs

		<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Finance	Between Groups	10.581	4	2.645	2.801	0.030
Staffing	Between Groups	7.816	4	1.954	2.019	0.097
Climate	Between Groups	11.58	4	2.895	3.104	0.019
Programming	Between Groups	1.208	4	0.302	0.292	0.882
Marketing	Between Groups	1.66	4	0.415	0.405	0.804
Demographic Changes	Between Groups	4.477	4	1.119	1.125	0.349

In Table 4.20, when considering the relationship between letter grade and the six constructs, there are only two significant relationships. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to

compare the effects of letter grade on Finance [$F(4, 104) = 2.801, p = .030$]. A linear relationship existed as the lower the letter grade, the lower the superintendent's confidence is in district finances. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of letter grade on district climate [$F(104, 4) = 2.895, p = .019$]. As letter grade goes down, so does the district climate.

Superintendent Disposition of Attracting Students Against Constructs

I ran analyses and there were no significant values of the construct relationships with the superintendent wanting to attract students. A superintendent's agreement with open enrollment policies had no relationship with his/her answers related to their perceptions of open enrollment on finance, staffing, climate, programming, marketing and demographics. The descriptives and inferential statistics for these analyses are available in the appendix.

Open Ended Responses

The respondents wrote 48 short answers to this open ended question: What other thoughts do you have based on current open enrollment policies and the influence on your local district? There were a variety of ideas presented that offered a deeper understanding of the answers provided to the survey. Superintendent responses were coded into these areas: finance, staffing and programming, competition, and superintendent and district relations. A summary of answers is provided below.

Financial Implications of Open Enrollment

The most common responses to the open ended question related to the financial influence of open enrollment. Comments focused on these areas: funding and budgeting along with staffing and programming.

With funding following students in Indiana, superintendents understood that they needed an increased enrollment to increase revenue because it directly impacts the budget. Some

districts have seen a loss of funding. In the words of one respondent, “Most rural districts are losing students. We have lost 30 students each of the past three years or 90 students total.” Based on the school funding formula, a district that loses 90 students has \$450,000 fewer dollars in the Education Fund. Those costs continue to compound each year. That district had to make rapid cuts to the budget each of those three years if they wanted to stay financially solvent. Therefore, the result of gaining and losing students directly relates to the superintendents’ function to plan district budgets. Superintendents perceived the challenge is to plan budgets for the next year when enrollment fluctuates. “Schools must operate as business and industry have had to,” stated one superintendent. There is no guarantee of future funding, similar to the business model. When it comes to count dates, one superintendent wanted two or four student enrollment count dates to maximize the amount of money available as students transfer into districts. The goal for districts with increasing enrollment is to gain quarterly increases in funding rather than just once or twice per year.

Districts were constantly looking for ways to increase funding. As noted by one respondent, “(1) open enrollment and recruit more students (2) operating referendum,” are the only way for a district to increase revenue. The state of Indiana has not kept up with appropriate student funding levels since 2009 noted one respondent. The cost to educate students is increasing, but the state funding has remained mostly stagnant. The superintendents reported that districts have endured rising costs the past ten years for equipment, utilities, wages/benefits, and health insurance. So how do schools increase funding? Most districts focused on attracting new students as the best way to increase funding according to one superintendent. Participating in a referendum can be an expensive and lengthy project and is impractical for many districts.

Despite the fact that recruiting students is viewed as essential to increase funding, one superintendent noted the idea that attracting and retaining students is not viable. “This view is not necessarily sustainable long term,” noted one superintendent. It makes it difficult to add staff knowing that the costs outpace the tuition reimbursement. As districts plan budgets, it proves to be difficult not knowing the enrollment from year to year. Another responded, “It creates a challenge from the standpoint of keeping up with the growth in our district from a budgetary standpoint.” The need to balance budgets and balance enrollment while maintaining a high quality district, is a challenge according to superintendents.

Staffing and Programming

Staffing and programming was another area that superintendents described in their open ended responses. Superintendents perceived difficulty with changes or additions from year to year. One superintendent stated, “We feel that we are always a year behind in correcting issues with large class numbers in certain areas.” When the school year starts, the district has to either add teachers or have large class sizes. The money will not follow the student until later in the semester after count day has happened. Unless the district can afford to hire additional staff right away, they are one year behind on meeting those increasing needs for staff. Then, if that district would have a drop in enrollment the next year, they might not know this until the start of school and that point districts may need to cut staff. Superintendents can only plan their hiring based on enrollment and that proves difficult with fluctuating enrollment numbers.

Competition for Students

Several superintendents reported an increase in the competition for students as a consequence of open enrollment. “Competition for quality students is the new reality in Indiana,” wrote one respondent. Unfortunately, one role of superintendents has become the need

to quantify students based on a financial value. Another commented, “Competition has forced all of us to strive to improve service to our customers.” It is a competition not only to improve, but to recruit more students. One respondent indicated that the increase in enrollment the past 10 years has allowed the district to add more programs to offer a high quality education. Some districts count on that new revenue as a way to remain financially stable and as a way to grow. A superintendent hoped to recruit students from out of state due to proximity to the state line as a way to grow the district enrollment. The number of Indiana students is limited and going outside of the state offers opportunities for more students. For districts to attract new students one superintendent suggested districts find their niche and work to be really good at something.

Finally, districts have resorted to self-promotion. One superintendent responded that open enrollment has created the “need for marketing and positive promotion.” Districts are now engaged in actively recruiting students from nearby districts. Some districts have hired marketing firms and advertised via radio, television, newspapers, mailers, and through social media to attract new students. A final response regarding competition “brings out the best in any organization” and “this is true for public education if given adequate time to financial[ly] respond to enrollment trends.” Some superintendents remain hopeful that the competition will improve education for students.

Collegiality is Strained

The next area of discussion for superintendents discussed the strain in relationships between districts. Superintendents perceived their relationships with each other have deteriorated since the onset of open enrollment. One superintendent reported, “As much as we try to be collegial, our relationship with other schools suffers because we compete for

students.” Another stated, “dog eat dog between public schools and our competitors (charters & private & church).” Illustrated here is the potential for rivalry due to open enrollment.

Shifting of Students

The superintendent perception is the reality of recruiting students is hurting small rural and urban schools as they lose students. Districts that are losing large numbers of students are now hurting financially. Small rural schools are in declining enrollment and districts have “a survival strategy to attract students from neighboring districts....there is swapping of students... (and) students float back and forth.” If districts cannot increase enrollment, they will continue to cut staff, programs, extracurriculars, and anything else they can in order to save what is left. In those rural areas where districts are miles apart, one superintendent noted that “open enrollment for students that have the resources to transfer only works for those students.” Only parents with the resources to transport across district lines are able to because there is no public transportation system. It seems as though students from a higher socioeconomic background can afford to choose open enrollment. However, in Indiana, there are some districts that provide transportation across district lines, thereby making it more feasible for students with no transportation to participate in open enrollment.

Besides rural schools, one superintendent stated that open enrollment has negatively effected “urban and high poverty schools.” The superintendents perceived that those students who stay behind are in a district that makes budget cuts and students suffer from those cuts. Poor districts continue to struggle to provide what financially stable districts are providing for students.

Summary

This chapter explained and analyzed the data collected in August and September of 2018. In the survey, I asked a series of questions to superintendents related to the perceptions of open enrollment had on Indiana public schools between 2015 and 2018. The data collected were used to analyze those perceptions.

The survey had six constructs: finance, staffing, climate, programming, marketing, and demographic changes. Data analysis consisted of bivariate analysis of the six constructs with demographic data, school letter grade, and superintendent disposition of wanting to attract students. Pearson correlations and One-Way ANOVA comparisons were made.

In summary, there were several correlations with moderate significant relationships. These are found within the analysis of the six constructs between staffing, climate, and finance. The bivariate analysis of the constructs and demographics resulted in several moderate relationships between the constructs of staffing and climate when compared to enrollment, and increase in free/reduced lunch and transfers into the district. An important note was that increasing diversity did not have a relationship with any of the constructs. It seems that race was not a factor in superintendent perceptions of the effects of open enrollment. The research for this dissertation did not rule out race in parental choice. However, poverty was related to district quality and staffing according to superintendents.

I hypothesized that superintendents from financially healthy districts would have a more favorable view of open enrollment. The financially healthy districts have higher rates of student transfers into the district. These districts were also able to maintain or increase staffing due to the amount of tuition that followed the students. In addition, these financially healthy districts that attracted students also had positive climates and were viewed favorably by stakeholders.

The superintendents in financially stable districts reported the maintaining of high quality programming and high quality staff. The same districts also have positive climate. These districts tend to have higher letter grades and are sought out by parents utilizing open enrollment. Students that remain in less financially stable districts suffer due to ongoing budget cuts and financial restraints according to superintendent perceptions.

The last chapter will discuss the conclusions drawn from the data analysis of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Open enrollment is a school choice option in all 50 states with 16 states allowing some restrictions and 20 states leaving it up to local districts (National School Choice Week, 2019). Since the passing of Indiana Public Law 146 in 2008, legislation allowing open enrollment, the importance of student enrollment numbers in the State of Indiana has changed; it behooves superintendents to consider the financial value of students. Parents are able to freely choose where their child will attend, but as students leave, so does the money and that has long term consequences for district stability. “Budget constraints are married to declining enrollment and present a host of issues that are never neatly packaged nor simple to address. The complexities are widespread and decentralized in the student body and across grades, classrooms, and legacy financial obligations” (Sung, 2018, para. 3). Therefore, districts are cognizant of the effects of shifting enrollment and funding patterns. Districts are actively seeking students and those districts that can afford it, market themselves in order to attract and retain students.

Statement of the Problem

The parental option of open enrollment has created a culture of fluidity regarding student enrollment in districts in the State of Indiana. When districts experience large numbers of students transferring in or out, there are consequences that ultimately impact the district. To date, there is no known published research related to how open enrollment policies have influenced school districts in Indiana. The district Education Fund receives state funding based on student enrollment. As enrollment increases, the funding also increases. When enrollment declines, funding declines. There are only two ways for a district to increase revenue: a referendum to increase local property tax rates or to increase enrollment.

It is unclear if Indiana districts have been able to provide high quality education while managing enrollment fluctuations. Also unknown is how these open enrollment policies changed the district demographics, if at all. How have superintendents adjusted district programs and policies based upon the impact of transfers in their districts? Superintendents are poised to be reliable informants as they manage these changes when it comes to staffing, programming, providing high quality instruction, and marketing their districts.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this dissertation was to collect superintendent perceptions related to the influence of the transfer of students and funds in Indiana school districts. Public Law 146 of 2008 allows students to transfer to any district that takes transfer students each year. If significant numbers of students transfer across district lines, potentially large amounts of money fluctuates between districts. As district enrollment increases, funding increases and as enrollment declines, so does funding from the State. Superintendents make decisions for their district based upon the amount of money in the Education Fund. When students are seen as an

economic function of thousands of dollars per child, large numbers of students transferring out could have a devastating effect on districts. Likewise, an influx of new students can also provide challenges to a district.

This study examined superintendent perceptions of the influence that law had on school finance, school programming, staffing, and demographics as significant numbers of students transferred in and out of districts. Three important questions guided this study:

4. How do Indiana superintendents perceive the effects of open enrollment in relation to: finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts?
5. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts related to district contexts?
6. How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, climate, program quality, staffing, marketing, and demographic changes related to their disposition of wanting to attract students?

Methods

A survey was sent to all 290 public school superintendents in Indiana. The Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents facilitated the recruitment of superintendents by sending the survey to his membership two different times in a three week period in the fall of 2018. The data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics version 25. The survey had six areas of focus that were used to create constructs for data analysis. The constructs created were: finance, staffing, climate, programming, marketing, and changes in demographics. Bivariate analyses were conducted using those constructs and the demographic data collected representing the superintendents and their districts. The findings of the data analysis are in Chapter 4.

Research Question 1

How do Indiana superintendents perceive the effects of open enrollment in relation to: finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts?

As superintendents navigated this new policy environment, I wanted to learn about their experience managing their district as they made decisions related to finance, staffing, climate, programming, marketing, and demographic changes. Previous generations of superintendents were not always cognizant of the changes needed in a district based on school choice and few changes were made to teaching styles, instruction, course offerings, or finances (Rubenstein et al., 1992). For superintendents in Indiana, worrying about high transfer student rates is relatively new with the onset of open enrollment. This research question examines the perception of each district superintendent as they adapt to open enrollment. This section examined the descriptives for each of the six constructs and how the superintendents perceived their district status.

As reported in the survey, superintendents do not believe the State of Indiana adequately funds public education. Superintendents reported that funding per pupil has not kept up with the rate of inflation and districts are struggling to be financially solvent, especially in districts with declining enrollment. Many districts are experienced declining enrollment and therefore they have declining funding. In that atmosphere, the superintendents ultimately have to make the decisions to cut staff and/or cut programming. According to superintendents, districts that are financially stable are able to provide high quality staff and maintain staffing levels. As these districts attracted students, the increase in money to the district helped keep that quality at a high level. These districts can pay more for teachers and are able to attract better teachers. In addition, financially strong districts provided better programming and extra-curricular opportunities for students. The literature discussed in chapter 2 supported these findings.

Wealthier districts are more attractive to parents. Fossey (1994) concluded that districts receiving higher rates of transfers had higher socioeconomic status of students, parents were more educated, and the receiving districts had higher per pupil expenditures. Superintendents understood that wealthier districts were more likely to gain students. Similarly, Welsch et al. (2009) also concluded that higher spending districts with more and better programming were more attractive to parents. Finances are extremely important when thinking about which districts are more likely to gain students, it is often the districts that have more money to spend overall.

The staffing construct had three areas where most superintendents perceived their district had strengths. Despite budget cuts and declining enrollment in many districts, superintendents still perceive they have a high quality teaching staff. Regardless of the increasing or declining enrollment of a district, superintendents perceived their staff as being high quality no matter what.

According to superintendents, the climate construct for their districts had generally positive results. Superintendents perceived overall, climate is positive within the respective districts. They reported that the local stakeholders view their districts favorably and neighboring districts view each others' districts favorably. This speaks to a certain level of respect among superintendents about the other districts. Later in this chapter, there is discussion about the loss of collegiality among superintendents, however, there still seems to be respect between the districts as they have favorable views of neighboring districts. Respondents believed there is a high level of teacher job satisfaction too. Despite the struggles and pressure on districts due to open enrollment, superintendents had high regards for their district's climate and morale.

The next construct, programming, was viewed favorably by respondents. Superintendents perceived that they have maintained high quality programs, added advanced

courses, and maintained high quality fine arts. The superintendents reported districts with high quality programming are attractive to students using open enrollment. The high quality programs in districts typically added advanced courses and maintained high quality fine arts. Superintendents also perceived the benefit of keeping class sizes small. The districts attracted students because they are able to offer what other smaller and declining enrollment districts may need to cut as a way to reduce costs.

According to superintendents, marketing a district is important. Half the districts are using some form of marketing campaign. Superintendents perceived the need to actively recruit students from other districts. Superintendents understand that in order to gain additional funding, they must compete for students. The State of Indiana, through open enrollment, has put superintendents at the forefront of attempting to attract and recruit students.

The last construct of demographic changes examined the open enrollment as it related to the percentage of students who qualified for free/reduced lunches, the change in racial demographics, policies that balance minority populations, policies limiting transfers, and change in letter grade. According to superintendents, districts experienced demographic changes due to open enrollment. The large number of students transferring districts in Indiana created an increase in free/reduced lunch percentage in almost half of the responding districts at 49.1%, according to superintendents. The rise of minority student populations were not noticeable in a majority of districts as reported by superintendents. Those reporting superintendents disagreed or were neutral about the rise of minorities. About half of the districts reported there was no change in the district letter grade. So, while large numbers of students are transferring across districts, the only perceived demographic change relates to an increase in free/reduced lunch rates.

In summary, superintendents are aware of the effects of open enrollment within the six constructs. While the superintendents believed that funding amounts are inadequate, they still can provide a quality education for students. Superintendents perceived they have high quality staff and positive district climate. The superintendents remained generally positive about what they do and how they perceive the quality of education from their district.

Research Question 2

How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, staffing, climate, program quality, marketing, and demographic shifts related to district context (% FRL, % Minority, tuition, transfers in/out, letter grade)?

I wanted to learn how superintendents perceived the influence of open enrollment on the district contexts of letter grade, minority percentage increase, free/reduced lunch percentages, change in enrollment, state tuition support, and the superintendent disposition of wanting to attract students. Several significant relationships were discovered when the inferential statistics were calculated.

Superintendents from districts with higher letter grades were more likely to be financially stable and to report having a positive climate. These districts reaped the financial benefits as enrollment increase because of financial stability and the positive climate. Parents were more likely to choose a district that is financially stable according to superintendents. This concurs with recent studies by Welsch et al. (2009) where results showed the most attractive schools were high performing and high spending districts. In addition, superintendents believed that these districts with higher letter grades have a positive school climate. Superintendents perceived districts with better finances as having better climate, better letter grades, and as more appealing to parents.

According to superintendent perceptions, there was no relationship between any of the six constructs and the change of minority student percentages. This lack of relationship may result from the fact that superintendents did not perceive minority populations as major users of open enrollment. Perhaps the change in minority percentages is not being reported or the percentages are actually entangled within the free/reduced lunch percentages. Superintendents were more likely to perceive negative change with an influx of free/reduced lunch students and not at all with minority students. For Indiana, superintendent responses did not match national findings showing school choice has increased stratification according to race and even created new segregation patterns (Cobb & Glass, 2009). The data collected for this dissertation did not allow for calculation changes in minority student demographics, but did indicate that superintendents did not perceive drastic changes in minority percentages. However, on a national level, California, and Colorado are experienced segregation due to school choice (Howe et al., 2002; Prins, 2007). The idea of “White-flight” is prevalent in these two states as parents choose to leave high Latino population districts are leaving areas with high poverty rates (Carlson et al., 2011; Howe et al., 2002; Prins, 2007)

It is important to understand which groups of students are more or less likely to make use of open enrollment and would be important for a possible future study. Another area of focus for future studies on equity and equality relates to which students benefit the most from open enrollment. A 2012 study by the Center for Educational Statistics showed higher rates of Whites using school choice options than the usage rates among Black and Hispanics. Future research would be needed to explore the implications of race and open enrollment.

Superintendents perceived that the districts where free/reduced lunch percentages increased there was a decrease in high quality staffing and positive school

climate. Superintendents perceive students who do not qualify for free/reduced lunch are more likely to participate in open enrollment and are leaving districts with lower quality teachers and lower school climate. This is important because students from lower socioeconomic status are less likely to take advantage of open enrollment. This indicated an issue with equity in education. Current research concludes that elite families tend to use school choice and this has led to increased stratification in schools (Bifulco et al.; 2009; Bell, 2009; Cobb & Glass, 1999; Holme et al., 2013). Families with financial resources to provide transportation to neighboring districts are more likely to utilize school choice. The issues of equity in education relates to whether or not all students to have equal opportunities and is important because as districts lose the students, they lose money and therefore are forced to make cuts. If only students with higher socioeconomic standing are using open enrollment, this will further segregate students based on class. The transferring students are attracted to higher spending and higher achieving districts (Howe, et al., 2002; Welsch et al., 2009). Therefore, lower spending and lower achieving district personnel are working with the remaining students. Superintendents are faced with the dilemma of making educational opportunities the same for all students, regardless if they leave or stay, even as funds decline for the districts losing students. District leaders must be aware of the students that leave and the students who stay and improve the quality of education for all students (Holme et al., 2013; Wells, 1990). Students are leaving schools with less extra-curricular offerings too (Welsch et al., 2009). Superintendents perceived that open enrollment creates a cycle of districts losing students and being less attractive to students, in turn causing the district to make cuts and then more students choose to leave in some of the respondents' districts. The students left behind in struggling districts are only going to have more issues as

districts continue to make budget cuts in order to be financially solvent. This could be a subject of future research.

The respondents to the dissertation survey believed increasing and declining enrollments has consequences. In districts where enrollment is increasing, superintendents believe they have a high quality staff, maintained staffing levels, and have been able to hire high quality new teachers. The perception is that districts maintaining or growing enrollment are more positive about who they have on staff. The districts are more likely to have the increase in funding because of new enrollees and therefore can maintain high quality staff. Conversely, districts that are in declining enrollment are less likely to keep current staffing levels. The districts that have to cut staff are a result of declining enrollment and the needed budget cuts.

Another area of findings relates to the number of students transferring out of a district, which increases as the programs in a district decline. Superintendents perceived the need to cut or limit programming as their enrollment declined. Superintendents indicated districts that lose students are not able to maintain what they used to be able to offer students. Districts struggled to offer programs that would keep students enrolled. Instead, other districts offered more attractive programming and the students transferred to the more appealing district. It is unclear in this dissertation if declining enrollment leads to reducing programs or if reducing programs leads to declining enrollment.

The final area where a relationship exists between the six constructs and the district contexts is with state tuition support and both staffing and climate. Superintendents in districts with high quality staff and with strong positive climates perceived that district funding from the state is not adequate. Tuition support is not sufficient to meet the needs of most districts according to superintendents.

Superintendents perceived districts that maintained staff and hired high quality teachers are experiencing high rates of transfers into the district according to respondents. The districts that are perceived as better gained more students. This is the basic principle of free market capitalism as applied to education.

In summary, the superintendent perceptions of the influence open enrollment has on their district contexts indicated several areas where a relationship exists. The biggest effect can be found in the constructs of finance, staffing, and climate when compared to district letter grade, increase in free/reduced lunch percentage, and change in enrollment numbers.

Research Question 3

How are superintendents' perceptions of finance, marketing, program quality, staffing, and demographic shifts related to the superintendent's disposition of wanting to attract students?

I wanted to learn how superintendents' desire to attract new students influenced the decisions they made for their respective districts. A superintendent's agreement with open enrollment policies had no relationship with his/her answers related to their perceptions of open enrollment on finance, staffing, climate, programming, marketing and demographics.

The short answer portion of the research provided better contextual clues about superintendent attitudes. Most superintendents understand that open enrollment is not going to change and it is the new reality of education. The competition can be both positive and negative as schools try to market the district and essentially steal students from other districts.

An essential function of superintendents is to keep the district financially solvent. The superintendents believed it is difficult to plan for finances because of fluctuating enrollment numbers. Districts can only increase funding through a referendum or by increasing enrollment.

Superintendents then see students as a valuable asset to helping keep district budgets healthy. However, superintendents also understood that these students are not adequately funded by the state and that too is hurting district budgets. Fluctuating budgets, due to fluctuating enrollments, can be difficult to plan from year to year for staffing and programming.

The perception is open enrollment has created competition between districts and it has hurt rural schools according to some superintendents. The participants described how open enrollment has also pitted communities against each other. The existing literature agrees as critics of school choice believe that unhealthy competition among schools limits cooperation (Howe et al., 2002). Superintendents' responses to this dissertation indicated they have to compete against other superintendents and it has hurt collegiality. The loss of collegiality has been concluded in other studies. In 1998, Jimerson found that collaboration, support, and professionalism suffered because of districts competing for students. School choice has created unhealthy competition among schools, limited cooperation, and divided neighborhoods (Howe et al., 2002). The same perception among Indiana superintendents is evident.

If districts want to attract and retain students, they are either forced to change or to make improvements (Herrman et al., 2009). If districts are to be successful, they should view the competition as a benefit for students. School choice and competition often leads to improved education quality and increased educational outcomes (Belfield & Levin, 2002).

According to superintendents, families that used open enrollment were able to provide transportation out of district because they have the resources that other families might not have. People who can afford to provide transportation are not typically the families on free/reduced lunch. The students who remained in the district are often times the ones who need to utilize choice, are often too poor (Mickelson et al., 2008). This creates an equity and equality

issue for those lower socioeconomic status families. Superintendents believed districts that are losing students are less likely to maintain high quality staff and programs for those students left behind in their local districts. Lee et al. (1991) found that schools with high rates of wealthier students leaving only widened the gap between the rich and the poor in districts.

According to superintendents, smaller rural and urban districts are the districts with the biggest decline in enrollments. Students are choosing to attend larger, suburban districts that offer better programming and have higher quality staff. There is an advantage at the larger and more affluent districts. According to existing literature, large districts tend to view school choice favorably because they offer more opportunities for students (Currey, MacPherson, & Schorr, 1992). Superintendents believed open enrollment is therefore creating fewer opportunities for students in smaller, declining enrollment districts.

In summary, while there were no direct findings related to the superintendent disposition of wanting to attract new students and the six constructs, the responses given to the open ended questions provided a great deal of insight into the superintendents' perceptions. Superintendents perceived that attracting new students to a district is an important way to increase district funding. They also understood that competition is now part of the educational process. Some districts are directly benefiting from open enrollment while other districts are losing students and making financial adjustments. Regardless, if a district is gaining or losing students, there are consequences due to open enrollment and superintendents are at the forefront of making the decisions that best meet the needs of their students.

Free Market Theory

Milton Friedman (1962) was the earliest and most vocal proponent of using competition as a way to improve education. The Free Market theory allows parents to decide what is best for

their child. Using the Free Market theory as applied to education, parents can actively seek districts that offer more programs and extracurriculars.

This dissertation found that 84.9% of superintendents reported that they need to compete for students. The superintendents reported that having higher letter grades, a positive public perception, and being financially sound are attractive to parents who wish to enroll their in the local district. The shift in enrollment policy seems to have redefine Superintendents' roles, as they no longer only educate local students. An opportunity now exists to create a dynamic and high quality district that can attract and retain students. In the past, superintendents were almost guaranteed to have all the students within district attend the local schools. Now, the as students can move freely between districts, superintendent roles need to be more active in the process to attract students. There is no longer a guarantee on enrollment and it can fluctuate from year to year. Superintendents need to market the district to prospective families not only within the district, but in neighboring communities as well if they wish to increase enrollment. Superintendents can increase their own capacity for understanding marketing or even hire an outside marketing firm for assistance.

In spite of some districts increasing enrollment and funding, there are districts losing students at alarming rates and those districts have been forced to make drastic cuts. The Free Market Theory has forced some districts to close buildings, cut staff, and some districts even considered closing. Districts have been forced to raise funds through increasing local tax revenue by way of the referendum process as a way to keep the district operating financially. This has shifted the tax burden away from the State of Indiana and back to the local taxpayer. For those districts with declining enrollment, the superintendents struggle to keep a balanced budget in a timely manner.

School choice is a way for parents to take an active role in their child's education. There are various reasons that parents choose other school options. In chapter 2, I discussed literature that outlined why parents use school choice. Chubb and Moe (1990) found that school choice options can free parents and students from low and underperforming schools. The literature indicates other reason for parents to utilize choice as it relates to family needs, family values, and programming (Ni & Arsen, 2011). Superintendents then must decide how they manage their district to attract these families. Local level administrators must now be able to market their schools or superintendents must be able to market districts to parents outside of the community (Tenbusch & Garrett, 1993). Districts can market their own programs and achievements as a way to draw in new enrollment. Superintendents understand why marketing the district is important as a way to pull students from other districts. In 1990, Graham and Ruhl found 52% of superintendents agreed that school choice was an essential part of a free society.

In summary, the Free Market theory, as applied to education, is working for some families. Parents are in the position to pursue what they believe is the best educational environment for their child(ren). They can choose other schools and districts for a variety of reasons. It is important for superintendents to know why parents are choosing to stay or to leave a district. Perhaps community surveys could be used to capture the thoughts of the local community. This can be helpful or hurtful for districts as superintendents make decisions based on the fluctuation of finances. However, viewing students as a source of income for the district may lose sight of what is really important in education.

According to the superintendent perceptions, the Free Market theory is working for successful districts and parents are choosing districts that they believe are better or more appealing to their child's educational needs. However, there are consequences for districts that

are losing students. The superintendents perceived small rural and urban districts are impacted negatively. The districts with declining enrollment have to make cuts to program and staffing and these schools have less positive climate according to superintendents. States consistently struggle to fund public education and proponents of school choice push for these options because the money follows the student (Carlson et al., 2011; Lamdin & Mintron, 1997). How does this affect those students that remain in the local district and cannot transfer out?

Is the Free Market theory an appropriate model for public education? Students have more value humanely and holistically, but budget concerns treat them as part of a financial equation. Some students and communities are the ultimate losers in this system. Smaller districts find it difficult to compete with larger districts. Declining finances in districts has a negative effect on the remaining students (Jimerson, 1998). Hopefully, those districts can continue to provide a high quality education with the students unable to take advantage of open enrollment.

Conclusions

Recommendations for Future Research

One of the unanswered questions from these dissertation results is what happens to the students who remain in a district that has declining enrollment and therefore declining funds? How does that impact those students? Under NCLB, a concern was that no student was “left behind.” Now, open enrollment, and more collectively school choice, is essentially leaving students behind in what can only be perceived as troubled or financially struggling districts. This has a negative influence on the remaining students (Jimerson, 1998). Additional research may be needed to understand how those districts meet the needs of students while maintaining the finances, staffing, climate, marketing, and programming. Additional research is needed to

examine the effects on students that utilize school choice and those that do not. How are students performing academically after the switch to a new district is important to understand if academic performance increases? The student perceptions of school choice would be important too. What level of satisfaction do students have before and after they transfer about their own educational experiences? In contrast, the students that stay in their local district would also have thoughts about their level of satisfaction by choosing to remain. Since the students are the ones directly affected, what do they think are the important reasons for choosing to leave or choosing to stay.

Perhaps researching into why parents choose to use open enrollment in Indiana would be a great study to help superintendents gain a better understanding of what parents find important in a district. If districts are actively seeking to recruit students, what are the push/pull factors that force parents to make a choice? Since competition among schools is increasing and superintendents perceive that competition as necessary for improvement, what changes are being made to attract students. Superintendents also indicated that marketing and self-promotion are important. What is the most effective way to market a district according to parents and does it make a difference or are they looking to leave the local district no matter what?

One final area for future research relates to race and socioeconomic status of the students participating in open enrollment in Indiana. Which races are more likely to transfer to another district? How does that change the percentage of students at sending and receiving districts? From this dissertation there was enough data to show that race was not a factor in superintendent perceptions but rather free/reduced lunch percentages was a factor. How do race and socioeconomic status relate and how are those students impacted by open enrollment?

Implications for Policy

As parents become more aware of school choice policies and take advantage of those options, how are states and districts creating policies that benefit all students. No policy should exclude students based on race or socioeconomic status. New choice policies should address further stratification by race, ethnicity, or income (Holme et al., 2013; Howe et al., 2002). Can districts provide incentives or even transportation options for parents in order to address the equity issues for parents? Existing literature has concluded that students from low socioeconomic status are underrepresented when it comes to choice. Cobb and Glass (2009) discussed the issue of students from both high and low socioeconomic statuses and how school choice policies often ignore the disadvantaged students. Policies should focus on the students from lower socioeconomic status, minority students, and those from isolated neighborhoods. It is socially unjust to further isolate these students from the advantaged students (Cobb & Glass, 2009). Any future policy should not create a wider gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged students.

In addition, as districts create policy, they might consider why choice is important from the parent perspective and look to create policies that actively engaged those parents in the schools. The success of a school or district is dependent on how well parents perceive what is happening and policies can increase access to information, support families, and increase communication (SchoolMint.com, 2019).

Implications for Practice

As superintendents continue to navigate open enrollment, there are several proactive solutions identified in this dissertation. Since the money follows the students, districts that are in need of additional finances can position themselves to attract and retain students.

Superintendents should view the competition for students as a way to focus on their district and improve in order to provide the best educational opportunities as possible. This can be through focusing on academic achievement, adding programs, or adding high quality teaching staff. The districts can seek to attract students through marketing programs which promote the district programming such as Fine Arts and college preparatory classes. As one respondent suggested, schools should find a niche and get really good at that as a way to attract students. In addition, district perception also is important. Through a proactive media campaign districts can send a message to the community and surrounding areas that their district is high quality. Superintendents agree that open enrollment is a relatively new focus and those that position themselves to gain students tend to be more financially solvent and gain higher numbers of new students. Thereby contributing to the perceived success of the district.

University programs for superintendent training can also assist how to make future superintendents more aware of the new role as it relates to marketing. Universities can teach superintendents the importance of being able to market the district and assist with best practices in those areas. The prospective superintendents could interview current superintendents from a variety of districts by size and ask their opinions on open enrollment and district policies. These future superintendents have to be able to create a positive district image and must actively seek input from the community. Communication with all stakeholders is key to maintaining that strong, positive image and hopefully it aides in the retention and attraction of students. Seeking opportunities for community input can happen through open forum meetings, round table discussions, coffee sessions, or inexpensive surveys. It is key for the superintendents at small, rural districts to be able to inform the community of district highlights and district programs that

will attract and retain students. This may help stop the flow of their students to larger and more suburban districts.

The counter-argument for districts that are losing students is that those districts need to operate on smaller budgets and be able to make corrections to remain financially solvent. Small districts need less money and fewer staff members and can adapt to declining enrollments. Superintendents must be creative in how they create funding streams through vocational courses or if they can legally manipulate budgets in order to save money into a rainy day account. If districts are fiscally responsible and conservative in spending, they might be able to negate some of the impact of drastic losses of students.

Concluding Remarks

Open enrollment in Indiana is not going to change in the foreseeable future. With a Republican super majority in the legislature and a Republican governor for the past 12 years, there seems to be little opposition to the policies of open enrollment and vouchers in Indiana. Instead superintendents' roles will continue to shift towards marketing and recruiting students. Superintendents are left dealing with the consequences, positive or negative, that come from the transfers of students and ultimately the funding. The money follows the students and districts are either winners or loser in this process. Students are more than a source of income. Unfortunately, worrying about enrollment losses and gains has become a primary function of superintendents. It is up to the superintendents to know and understand the influence this has on a district. At that point, the superintendent can focus on what will make that district successful.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Items

Demographics

1. How many years have you been superintendent at your district?

Sliding scale

0-35 years

2. How many years have you been a superintendent?

Sliding scale

0-35 years

3. What letter grade did your district earn from the Indiana Department of Education in 2016-2017?

- a. A
- b. B
- c. C
- d. D
- e. F

4. How many students are currently enrolled in your district?

Sliding scale

300-20,000

5. What was your district's free and reduced lunch rate for the 2017-2018 school year?

Sliding scale

0%-100%

6. What is your district's minority enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year?

Sliding scale

0%-100%

7. The number of students transferred into the district or transferred out of the district during the 2017-2018 school year due to open enrollment was:

Sliding scale

-1,000-1,000

8. Our district receives this much total state tuition per pupil.

Sliding scale

\$4,000-\$11,000

9. As superintendent, I want to attract new students to the district.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

All questions should be framed around how open enrollment policies have influenced your current school district. Think about your district over a three year period from the 2015-2016 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. How has your district changed over that 3 year period?

Finance

1. Our district has lost revenue due to students transferring to other districts.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2. The amount of money the state gives per pupil in the Basic Grant is adequate to provide a high quality education.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3. Our district is willing to use local funds (Capital Projects Fund, Debt, Service Fund, Transportation Fund) on students who transfer into our district.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4. Our district has sought/ is seeking alternative revenue streams such as a referendum or general obligation bond for additional school funding.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5. Our district has built new facilities in order to attract or retain students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

6. Our district has made cuts to staffing and programs due to a loss of revenue.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Staffing Decisions

1. Our district was able to maintain staffing levels.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2. Our district increased staffing levels.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3. Our district has maintained a high quality teaching staff.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4. Our district has experienced a teacher shortage.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5. Our district has been able to hire high quality teachers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

District Climate

1. The social culture is more positive within the district.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2. There has been an increase in the number of discipline referrals within the district (fights, absenteeism, drugs/alcohol, class disruptions)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3. There is a negative perception of our district.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4. Our district stakeholders believe we offer a high quality education.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5. Teachers generally express high job satisfaction in the district.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

6. Our district is viewed favorably by neighboring districts and communities.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

District Demographic Changes

1. Our district had an increase in free and reduced lunch percentage.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2. Our district percentages of minority students has risen.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3. Our district has a policy for transfer students that recognizes the need to balance majority and minority populations.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4. Our district policy sets limits on the number of students transferring into the district.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5. Our district letter grade over the past three years has improved.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Programming and Extracurriculars

1. Our district added special education programs in order to attract and retain students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2. Our district maintains high quality special education programs.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3. Our district added advanced level courses at the high school level (i.e. Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, International Baccalaureate) in order to attract and retain students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4. Our district has maintained high quality Fine Arts programs in order to attract and retain students in the district.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5. Our district added sports programs in order to attract and retain students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

6. Our district has maintained small class sizes as a way to offer an effective instructional program.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Marketing

1. Our district advertises through social media, television, radio, billboards, or newspapers in order to attract and retain students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2. Our district has contracted with a marketing firm in order to attract and retain students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4. Our district understands that competing for students is the new reality in public education.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Open Ended

What other thoughts do you have based on current open enrollment policies and the impact on your district?

APPENDIX B

Table Appendix B**Superintendent Disposition of Attracting Students and Constructs**

		<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>
Finance	SD	11	0.372	1.224	0.369
	D	3	0.704	0.578	0.334
	N	4	-0.372	1.063	0.531
	A	15	0.139	0.838	0.216
	S	77	-0.084	1.003	0.114
	Total	110	0.003	1.003	0.095
Staffing	SD	11	0.192	0.813	0.245
	D	3	-0.109	0.150	0.087
	N	4	0.767	1.532	0.766
	A	15	0.017	1.002	0.259
	SA	74	-0.065	1.018	0.118
	Total	107	0.002	1.003	0.097
Climate	SD	10	-0.107	0.979	0.310
	D	3	-0.205	0.882	0.509
	N	4	0.283	1.038	0.517
	A	15	0.063	0.818	0.211
	SA	73	-0.008	1.063	0.124
	Total	105	-0.001	1.004	0.098
Programming	SD	8	0.034	0.772	0.273
	D	3	0.234	0.280	0.162
	N	4	0.745	0.584	0.292
	A	15	0.076	1.120	0.289
	SA	71	-0.082	1.031	0.122
	Total	101	-0.007	1.002	0.010
Marketing	SD	9	0.068	0.946	0.315
	D	3	-0.286	1.606	0.928
	N	4	-0.268	1.311	0.655
	A	15	-0.247	0.954	0.246
	SA	73	0.069	0.993	0.116

Demographic Changes	Total	104	0	1	0.098
	SD	10	-0.504	0.914	0.289
	D	3	-0.330	0.669	0.387
	N	4	0.598	0.981	0.4905
	A	15	0.319	1.182	0.305
	SA	74	-0.016	0.967	0.112
	Total	106	0	1	0.09712859

APPENDIX C

Table Appendix C**Attract Students Means**

		<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Finance	Between Groups	4.395	4	1.099	1.095	0.363
	Within Groups	105.348	105	1.003		
	Total	109.743	109			
Staffing	Between Groups	3.108	4	0.777	0.766	0.55
	Within Groups	103.431	102	1.014		
	Total	106.539	106			
Climate	Between Groups	0.628	4	0.157	0.151	0.962
	Within Groups	104.207	100	1.042		
	Total	104.835	104			
Programming	Between Groups	2.951	4	0.738	0.727	0.576
	Within Groups	97.383	96	1.014		
	Total	100.334	100			
Marketing	Between Groups	1.839	4	0.46	0.45	0.772
	Within Groups	101.161	99	1.022		
	Total	103	103			
Demographic Changes	Between Groups	5.85	4	1.462	1.49	0.211
	Within Groups	99.15	101	0.982		
	Total	105	105			

APPENDIX D

Table Appendix D

Demographics with Letter Grades Descriptives

		<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std.</u> <u>Deviation</u>	<u>Std.</u> <u>Error</u>
Years as superintendent at current district	A	21	4.71	3.823	0.834
	B	61	6.93	6.509	0.833
	C	23	5.22	3.384	0.706
	D	1	1	.	.
	F	1	1	.	.
	Total	107	6.02	5.527	0.534
Years as a superintendent	A	21	8.81	5.87	1.281
	B	61	8.9	6.236	0.798
	C	25	9.44	7.985	1.597
	D	1	1	.	.
	F	1	1	.	.
	Total	109	8.86	6.586	0.631
Enrollment	A	23	4135.87	3563.042	742.946
	B	63	2436.4	2919.701	367.848
	C	25	3173.16	4225.823	845.165
	D	1	1628	.	.
	F	1	1480	.	.
	Total	113	2929.69	3394.424	319.321
Increase free/reduced lunch percentage	A	23	30.17	11.13	2.321
	B	62	46.53	11.858	1.506
	C	25	57.76	13.803	2.761
	D	1	76	.	.
	F	1	52	.	.
	Total	112	45.99	15.319	1.447
Rise of minority student percentage	A	23	9.83	7.808	1.628
	B	61	13.21	19.691	2.521
	C	24	21.96	27.196	5.551
	D	1	12	.	.
	F	1	2	.	.
	Total	110	14.3	20.026	1.909
Transfers into the district	A	21	151.1	144.665	31.568
	B	61	161.03	135.652	17.368
	C	24	199.83	299.055	61.044
	D	1	77	.	.

	F	1	4	.	.
	Total	108	165.49	184.629	17.766
Transfers out of the district	A	21	89.67	112.057	24.453
	B	58	152	370.313	48.625
	C	24	227.54	364.122	74.326
	D	1	368	.	.
	F	1	72	.	.
	Total	105	158.1	330.862	32.289
Total tuition from the state	A	23	5796.39	691.808	144.252
	B	62	5785.11	467.379	59.357
	C	24	6192.25	412.781	84.259
	D	1	7026	.	.
	F	1	6800	.	.
	Total	111	5895.8	547.425	51.959

APPENDIX E

Table Appendix E**Correlation Between Demographics**

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
Years as superintendent in district	1	.400**	-0.014	-0.005	-0.13	.242*	0.085	-0.091
Years as superintendent	.400**	1	.194*	-0.02	-0.089	0.075	0.043	0.077
Enrollment	-0.014	.194*	1	-0.069	.398**	.354**	.397**	-0.065
Increase free/reduced lunch percentage	-0.005	-0.02	-0.069	1	.378**	0.057	.206*	.309**
Rise of minority percent change	-0.13	-0.089	.398**	.378**	1	0.14	.281**	-0.006
Transfers in to district	.242*	0.075	.354**	0.057	0.14	1	.379**	0.003
Transfers out of district	0.085	0.043	.397**	.206*	.281**	.379**	1	0.007
Total tuition from state	-0.091	0.077	-0.065	.309**	-0.006	0.003	0.007	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

- 1- Years as superintendent in district
- 2- Years as superintendent
- 3- Enrollment
- 4- Increase free/reduced lunch percentage
- 5- Rise of minority student percentage
- 6- Transfers into the district
- 7- Transfers out of the district
- 8- Total tuition from the state

APPENDIX F

Table Appendix F**Letter Grade Compared to Constructs Descriptives**

		<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>
Finance	A	23	0.423	0.983	0.2056
	B	61	0.040	1.019	0.130
	C	24	-0.400	0.823	0.168
	D	1	-1.219	.	.
	F	1	-1.008	.	.
	Total	110	0.003	1.003	0.0956
Staffing	A	21	0.381	0.918	0.200
	B	61	0.025	0.959	0.123
	C	23	-0.341	1.102	0.230
	D	1	-1.430	.	.
	F	1	0.028	.	.
	Total	107	0.002	1.002	0.097
Climate	A	20	0.295	0.780	0.174
	B	60	0.113	0.931	0.120
	C	23	-0.436	1.177	0.245
	D	1	-1.954	.	.
	F	1	-0.931	.	.
	Total	105	-0.001	1.004	0.098
Programming	A	20	0.179	0.928	0.207
	B	56	-0.036	0.100	0.134
	C	23	-0.071	1.124	0.234
	D	1	-0.619	.	.
	F	1	0.020	.	.
	Total	101	-0.007	1.002	0.010
Marketing	A	21	-0.210	1.103	0.240
	B	58	0.008	1.028	0.135
	C	23	0.170	0.873	0.182
	D	1	0.202	.	.
	F	1	-0.145	.	.
	Total	104	0	1	0.098
Diversity	A	20	-0.228	0.769	0.172
	B	61	0.000	0.953	0.122
	C	23	0.245	1.257	0.262
	D	1	0.281	.	.
	F	1	-1.402	.	.
	Total	106	0	1	0.097

The ANOVA analysis of letter grades compared against each construct did not find any relationship exists between individual letter grade earned by the district and the six constructs.

The analysis of the means found all letter grades fell within 1-2 standard deviations.